

HOUSE OF LORDS 21

This is *House of Lords*, a zeen by, for and about publishing and publishers, GMing and GMs. It runs no games, and is available to just about anybody. It's composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and an array of letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Hopefully, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth.

"House of Lords appears every three months or so, and from time to time appears to be heading for its own rectal passageways." - Wallace Nicoll

House of Lords is, and always will be, what you make it.

You can get this zeen one of three ways. First of all, by sending me one American Dollar per issue. Second, by trading publications with me. Third, if you don't pub, but get some interesting zeens which I don't get, I may be willing to trade for a few issues of those. Make me an offer.

I also expect a fair amount of participation from all of you out there. This zeen sinks or swims on the basis of your contributions. Yes, we spell it "zeen."

Your publisher for this evening is Dick Martin, 17601 Lisa Dr, Rockville, MD 20855-1319.

Each subheading has at one time been the subject of a New Business "feature." That's how we choose topics, more or less. If you'd like to see a particular topic discussed, just write a couple paragraphs worth of your opinions on the subject to get the ball rolling and we'll go with it.

Since this is our 21st issue, we are legally "old enough" to be driven to drinking. Just say no!

announcements

services

Vince Lutterbie is rumored to have taken over as the head of the USOS, but I've seen nothing from him on this yet.

Time for a new census of North American dipdom! Once again, I'll be compiling the names and addresses of as many dipdomites as I can, but I need your cooperation to make it all possible. I ask two things: please send me your subscriber list before the end of October, and please mention somewhere in your next issue that I'm on the lookout for address lists (this'll help get the word out to pubbers that I don't have contact with). This is the first one of these rascals I've done from start to finish in quite a few years, and unlike Ken I like to get things like this over with. Depending on when the lists come in, I'd like to get the 1989 issue out by Thanksgiving. As always, pubbers sending in their lists will get a copy of the final results *absolutely free!* Don't miss out on this great opportunity. Cost to everybody else will be one lousy dollar. So send those lists now to Dick Martin (17601 Lisa Dr, Rockville, MD 20855).

Jan Niechwiadowicz is compiling the Postal Gamesplayers' Yearbook, and has sent out a survey form for it. The deadline for return of these survey forms is November 4, 1989, so there's quite a bit of time yet if you haven't sent yours back. If there's space available, I'll include a copy of the survey with this issue. If not, you can either write and ask me for one, or Jan's address is 35 Poplar Crescent, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury SY3 0QD, UK if you'd rather go right to the source.

new zeens

Heroes of Olympus, Steve Nicewarner (107th FSU, Box 98, Ft Bragg, NC 28307) subs go for 40¢ an issue, with no apparent game fee for Food Fight, Nomic, Down With The King, Final Conflict, Nuclear War, Fury of Dracula, Conquistador, and Blood Royale.

When The Lights Went Out, Jesse Severe (Box 548, Sheffield, IA 50475) \$5 for 10 issues. I think he'll run Dip if anybody asks.

The Diplomacy Tribune, Gerald Todd, Jr (8047 High Point Rd, Baltimore, MD 21226-2020) subs are \$1 an issue, game fees \$3 for regular dip and \$5 for world dip.

Ground Zero, Timothy Raithel (2131 N Lincoln St, Arlington, VA 22207) will run Dip, Russian Campaign, Third Reich, Downfall VII and Beseiged!

Metadiplomat, Jeff McKee (1674 S Parkwood, Wichita, KS 67208-4535) \$5 for 12 issues, runs Dip and Gunboat English-style.

Been There, Done That, Tom Nash (5512 Pilgrim Rd, Baltimore, MD 21214) has moved out of *The Scribblerist* to zeendom. Subs can be had for \$6/10 issues.

Moire, Tim Moore (405 Fair Dr, #101, Costa Mesa, CA 92626-6215) has probably moved out of *Dark Mirror* to zeendom, depending on what happens with *Dark Mirror*. The most recent issue was lying around here somewhere, but I can't find it for sub info and that sort of stuff.

Entropy, Jason Bergman (PO Box 23780, Atlanta, GA 30322) \$6.50 for 10 issues, runs Junta, Source of the Nile, Downfall VII, Stab, Colonia VII, Dip and Gunboat. What, no Third Reich?!

The Big Bop, Dan Gavrilovic (59 Deerfield Rd, Scarborough, Ont M1K-4X2 CANADA) subs \$5 for 10, \$4 gamefees for Dip and some other undecided variant.

old zeens

Praxis, since it publishes less frequently than we do, is probably folded. Even more telling, Alan finally NMRed in his *Graustark* game on what would have been his winning turn. Instead we've annihilated five of his units, and the game will probably end in a draw now. My guess is that we won't hear from Alan for another five years, when he will return as an Elder Statesman of the Canadian Hobby.

According to the latest *Moire*, we've possibly seen the last of *Dark Mirror*. Reason for the fold: lack of interest in dipdom on the part of the publisher, Audrey Jaxon.

It seems safe to say that another relatively new

zeen has departed: *News From Bree*. Haven't seen an issue for quite some time, and haven't heard anything from Chris Gabel for ages.

On a somewhat happier note, Mark Lilleleht has folded *The Scribblerist* and issued refunds. What a concept! Supposedly he's also putting out one last issue in "late August/early September" but that's evidently not going to happen. At least not in the stated timeframe. Rumor is that Mark has discovered girls.

poll results

Top ten zeens, Marco Poll: *House of Lords/Fiat Bellum* (tie), *Rebel*, *Kathy's Korner/Penguin Dip* (tie), *Canadian Diplomat/Praxis* (tie), *benzene*, *Diplomacy Digest*, *Costaguana*.

Top ten zeens, Linsey Poll: *Fiat Bellum*, *Perelandra*, *Disease City*, *Electronic Protocol*, *Trax*, *Carolina Command and Commentary*, *benzene*, *Dippy*, *Penguin Dip*, *Canadian Diplomat*.

Operable gathered another 27 votes in the Linsey Poll this year, a clear mandate to continue.

Top ten zeens, Xyns People Read Poll: *Comrades in Arms*, *Canadian Diplomat*, *Praxis*, *House of Lords*, *Rebel*, *Fiat Bellum*, *Vertigo*, *Diplomacy World*, *Perelandra*, *Kathy's Korner*.

I believe we are now safe from the poll bug until next summer.

the concept

(BOB OLSEN) All this hand-wringing about the State of the Hobby and all that drivel seems from my (somewhat distant) perspective to be rather silly. Is the hobby in decline...is everything swell...is it damaging to Dipdom to call a spade a spade...how ridiculous. Dip stands or falls on its own merits. Expecting it to grow like Topsy (and who the hell was Topsy anyway, I'd like to know?) forever is absurd. Eventually, the hobby and the game it toadies to will disappear—not because A made shame shame to B, or even because B did such and such, but because times change. Given such things as the rise of competing pastimes (computers, to name one), declining standards of literacy among our Deplorable Youth (Woody, for example), not to mention Don Williams, it's amazing that Dipdom has survived as long as it has. And it will continue to do so...until the Marketplace (of Ideas, of Pastimes) says otherwise. And then...poof.

[But will it just be "poof" or will dipdom

mutate and survive? After all, with the enhanced mail possibilities of the computer networks, dipdom should be able to thrive. Those without access to electronic mail may be out of luck, but dipdom won't suddenly disappear as long as these people are out there.]

(ROBERT SACKS) Perhaps I put more into "going through the motions" than others do, but I think my players enjoy my zeen. My last issue went to 26 players + 1 married couple of players, 1 person signed up to play, 1 former player carried until his game ends, 2 friends from college who subscribe, 6 samples, 4 comps to hobby officers, 2 comps to game companies, 1 trade, and 1 game designer (to be comped when his sub expires). I have 3 games about to start.

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) I agree with Michael Hopcroft in *HoL* #19 that there's a lot of potential problems lying in wait for the publisher with an unrestricted trade policy. First, you can easily find yourself overcommitted with ten, twenty, thirty, or even more trades making up the bulk of your subscriber list, causing you to run up an ever-larger deficit until you fold the zeen because of its drain on your finances. Remember only trades *with zeens you would have subscribed to anyway* won't hurt your pocketbook. Second, the problem Michael ran into is bound to come up—a player in one of your games gets the zeen because he or she is trading with you, and then their zeen is terminally late. Polite requests that the pubber subscribe are met with "next issue any day now" letters, but no zeens. If you kick them out, there's obviously going to be bad blood created, possibly another feud. There's no real solution to this problem; you just have to *politely* threaten to drop them from the mailing list and hope they'll pay up or publish. Third, there is the problem of how to cut off a trade that you no longer want to make; the other zeen is too often late, too small compared to yours, or just not your cup of tea. The other publisher just adores your zeen, though—what do you do?

Although I still trade *Penguin Dip* with a few SF zeens (those that prefer their "subscribers" *not* to send money, but rather to trade, loc, or contribute), for the great majority of the zeens I currently receive, I simply send the bucks to subscribe to them, with a few mutual subs. I originally cut out trades in an attempt to get my hobby finances under control, but the greatest benefit I've found of this policy is that I now control the number and type of zeens that I receive.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) It seems a lot of people want me to answer questions on various incidents (which, give the incidents I've been involved in lately, does not surprise me in the least!) I paid François' bill for the same reason that anyone pays a blackmailer: to get him off my back. It's as simple as that. It is notable that he hasn't sent me the zeen lately after the spat went public; but does that mean I'll get any of the money back? It does not. ("And there is nothing in the void where the bang caused the hole in the middle of it all!")

And where *did* Mark Nelson get his version of what happened? Did he get it from the F-word himself? Yes I *did* try to work out the matter privately; after all, I had ordered that copy of *Source of the Nile* from him willingly, and he did sub to *Nutmeg*.

(WALLACE NICOLL) Must agree with Linda's comments about covering letters with a sample copy of a zeen. Overseas-wise this can be a problem, though I tend to send a letter under separate cover to reduce costs. The zeen goes "Printed Matter" which doesn't allow (officially) any personal comments to be included. What I really object to are photocopied covering letters which start off "Dear Editor..."

Like Larry I find myself skipping large chunks of *HoL* these days. I guess I find the quintessentially American bits (like disputes over who did what in which Poll at some time or other, or what the function of the MNC/MNCUC is) boring, or not relevant. Despite this, there's still plenty to read—if I only had the time. I recently worked my way through the last four issues—hence the silence from me for a few months!

Seems as though Mark Nelson is cheesing you off with his "I know it all" approach. He's done this to many others, including me, in the past. At a big housecon a few years ago there was a quiz—basically frp in nature, but with a few postal games zeen questions. I was really the only person at that time in the more mainstream hobby, and Mark was only starting to become involved. He all but ridiculed me because he knew who some "one-hit wonder" zeen editor was while I, the "supposed expert" didn't! There's nothing wrong with his enthusiasm, or his appetite for knowledge about the hobby's history (I personally couldn't give a toss about the past of the hobby...) but I tend to think he often grabs the wrong end of a red-hot poker.

I'm now being very choosy about those I trade with, and to be honest haven't really seen any new zeens which sufficiently pique my interest to make

me throw in a trade offer for *PoW*! In the instance where an existing subber begins to publish, if it's an old hand back for another stint, and he proved himself before—even Billenness qualified!—I'd simply change to a trade if it was agreeable on both sides. As an alternative mutual subs can work. Where the subber had not yet proved himself as a pubber (luckily "s" and "p" aren't near each other on the keyboard!) I'd give them moral support in the form of free plugs, and mentions, but wouldn't necessarily sub or trade. I've been burned a few times by zeens which never make it to issue 5. If there is a big delay I have been known to phone and check if there are problems. If nothing is forthcoming, and I've mailed a further issue or two and still no zeen or subs appear, I'll simply drop that editor. Why make a difference between a pubber who fails to come up with the goods and a subber who doesn't renew his subs when they run out?

How about a new topic on whether games create zeens, or zeens the games? Basically the concept would be whether a publisher begins because he wants to provide a games service to players, for which he doesn't need to have a zeen—he could easily send reports out to the players only in each game—or whether he wants to run a zeen, and the games are the only thing which keeps it ticking over at a reasonable frequency.

[I know that I started publishing so I could run games. I also know that many of you have come about it the other way around. So here we are then, a new topic for you folks to chew on.]

(STEVE LANGLEY) Publishing: Did I get the message that publishers shouldn't play Diplomacy? They should put all of their time and energy into being better publishers? Personally, when I was publishing in a big way, I was also playing in a big way. When I tired of playing, I also tired of publishing. If I had to have chosen between being a player and being a publisher, I would have opted to play. Once burned out of playing, would I have then moved on to publishing? Probably not.

It's all a function of time, energy, and interest. Some publishers may not play, others may play a lot. My guess is that if those who play a lot gave up their play, their publishing would soon follow.

Conspiracy: Is there really a plot to make Woody the number one dip player in the world? Get real, Olsen, with Williams as the BNC, no one will be the number one Dip player in the world. Give Don six months with those numbers, and there won't be any way that anyone could possibly figure out who is playing with whom, much less

how well they are doing. We are talking Clark Bar Scandal here.

[Of my two peak publishing periods, one had me playing in a lot of games, the other didn't. These days, I just find it too easy to forget deadlines, even when I'm still actively diplomacizing. Guess that's a sign of being burned out on playing. So if it comes down to choosing, I'd probably publish instead of play. At least when it comes to playing Dip—I still play Civ, 1830, and a variant or two. Time for a little variety in life.]

(KEVIN BROWN) *HoL* gets better every issue because there's less Linsey each time. I guess *OPERABLE* is a success.

It does seem like the more prominent hobby members play in less games on the average than average hobby members. I'm only in one Dip game right now, so I must be real prominent.

[Next to you, Melinda's 257 games fade into insignificance.]

(DON DEL GRANDE) First of all, does the Linsey stuff in letters to you (as opposed to Julie) end up in *HoL* or in *OPERABLE*?

I must note a mistake in Richard Wheat's quote: San Francisco is a *country*, not a state. States don't have their own foreign policy.

I read that each major city has a federal form filed away somewhere to notify Washington of how many persons survived a nuclear attack on that city, under the impression that even if everything else is vaporized, the bureaucracy will rise from the rubble. There's a similar fate waiting for the hobby—when everything else comes to a halt, there will always be the "undarksiders" attacking the "darksiders" for things that happened who cares how many years ago, and the "darksiders" responding with attacks countering the first attacks, and so on. *Why can't both sides just agree to call it a draw?* (Recent events have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that this feud will *never* end, even if one or more of the "involved parties" leaves the hobby—and when one does, it would not surprise me if somebody on the "same" side blames the "other" side for "driving that person out of the hobby.")

Even if any "feud moratorium" becomes permanent, there will always be others to ask and/or answer the questions. (You know that I am inclined to answer any questions asked to Kathy that I can, and now Mark is asking the questions.) Perhaps if everybody asked the questions and

nobody gave any answers, both sides will get bored with the whole idea of the feud.

Elmer Hinton's name was brought up at the Game Manufacturers' Association "news, trends, and gossip" meeting at ORIGINS. It seems that, back in the 1970s, he ran a PBM called "Lords of Valetia" which ended up swallowing the balance of at least one GAMA member without providing the appropriate GMing. However, Elmer finishes second to some guy charging \$20 per turn for some WWII game.

One final thing — I keep reading about Kathy and her granddaughter. Does anybody know (a) who this granddaughter's parents are, and (b) why she always seems to be with Kathy? (Or is it just the way she talks about her? Reminds me of my parents talking about my one-year-old nephew....)

[Don, you never cease to amaze me. Linsey stuff is as likely to end up on the cutting room floor as anywhere else these days. This feud became boring years ago, maybe now it's time for it to end.

[Perhaps the WWII game is expensive, but that doesn't necessarily make it overpriced. Depending on the level of complexity and amount of work done by the GMs, \$20 may be cheap. How much did it cost the US to do the real thing?

[To answer your final question, yes, somebody knows who this granddaughter's parents are, and why she always seems to be with Kathy. You're welcome.]

(JOHN CARUSO) Marc Hanna makes some interesting comments about feuding. Unfortunately, most of his comments are off the mark. Comments like people try to ignore feuding because it's an "albatross" or an "embarrassment" are pretty much untrue. People avoid it because they don't want to get dragged into the quagmire. Poke fun at it? That will only drag you in and get you labelled a feuder. Believe me, I know. Attack the feud—that too drags you in. Believe me, I know. Trying to get both sides to shut up to end the feud won't work either. A feud will never end as long as the reason for the feud exists. To end feuding (or any feud in general), what needs to be done is locating the cause of the feud, then removing the cause. If the cause can't be eliminated, the feud will only resurface.

François Cuerrier—there's much I could say about Mr Cuerrier and his policy of sending an unsolicited zeen and then billing a person for it. However, I'll just say that I don't agree with it, inform people about Cuerrier's operations, and advise people that they are under no obligation to

pay for unsolicited samples.

To answer Brad Wilson's three questions about feuding: No, feuding doesn't improve Dipdom. (Note—debating an issue isn't feuding, and if an undesirable left Dipdom the feud would end, wouldn't it?) Yes, I think feuding does discourage newcomers. Yes, Dipdom would be more fun without feuding.

Lost Boys: I wonder whatever happened to Gary Coughlan, Bob Arnett, Jane Proskin, Linda Simpson.

[Thanks for answering Brad's questions, but as my teachers always used to tell me, could you please expand on these answers? Why doesn't feuding improve dipdom? Depending on how it's done, say Williams vs Olsen, feuding can be just fine. It would seem that the only way to avoid feuding is to ignore it totally, and that includes not saying dumb stuff like "I'm ignoring this feud even though I think so-and-so is always right about everything."]

(JEFF MCKEE) In reply to Brad Wilson, I think I'm qualified as anyone to answer the question, "Where have all the funny people gone?" First of all, Dick does have a point about a lot of funny people leaving the hobby. I'm new enough that I have never seen an issue of *Brutus Bulletin*, and although I was impressed with a copy of *Retal* from the NAZB, I did not sign up for it because of the difficulty in signing up for games there.

[Um, glad to know you're qualified to answer the question. But what was that answer again?]

(JIM BURGESS) It's good to see *HoL* again. It makes us old farts (Steve Langley is extreme) feel good imparting our Solomonic wisdom. Don't tell anyone that we don't know what the hell we're talking about.

I thought Brad Wilson's comments on feuding and humor were right on. I try to write funny stuff too, and fail more often than Brad, but I try. My subzeen is not a feud-free zone, but it generally has a fun-loving feel about it. In Dipdom some humor is quite naturally going to be feud-related. You just have to keep the general tone light. I do it by requiring people to abuse me at least as much as anyone else. It seems to work. I like the idea that Bruce Geryk still writes humorous letters for me.

If editors encourage homegrown humor, they'll get it. I still get infrequent contributions (in press, mostly) from Olsen and Tallman, but lamenting past masters is too easy. I'm developing (actually, I

have nothing to do with it, but at least I'm publishing their stuff) new funny people like Paul Kenny, Glenn Petroski, Tom Nash, and this Geryk kid. It is precisely the fact that the age is so serious that we need humor. I just wish I wasn't so obsequious.

[I promise not to tell anyone if you won't. What do you do to encourage homegrown humor—tell dumb jokes, act like a boob, write whacked-out black press yourself, what?]

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Brad is right about zeens lacking humor these days. Once in a while I read something hilarious in the hobby press (a travel review by Andy Lischett, John Caruso's description of his phone call from Gary Behnen, David Perlmutter's tribute to Fred Davis, game press one-liners from Don Williams), but mostly what I read—and, admittedly, run, is deadly serious: theses on world affairs, essays on hobby politics. Unfortunately, I'm not sure if there's much we can do about that. Of course, the famed *KK* "contests" have drawn some great responses, but by and large it doesn't seem to me possible to solicit humor in the same way we solicit more serious comments. When someone with a talent for writing humor finds something which tickles his/her funnybone—and, as you say, the times do not inspire humor either in or out of the hobby—pubbers will have something funny to print. For now, all we can do is thank hobby humorists for their contributions (I make a point of doing this), tell newcomers humor will be printed if forthcoming, and, when inspiration strikes, make our own feeble attempts at humor. My own efforts have met with mixed success, making me very conscious that—to quote an old line—"Death is easy. Comedy is hard."

To Brad: Chocolate addiction? What chocolate addiction? (Just wanted to see if I could type that with a straight face. Failed miserably.)

(JIM MEINEL) Was reading *HoL* yesterday with Jenae and saw I wrote a really bad sentence. I didn't mean that *Paul Gardner* had found a woman and disappeared, but rather, Paul said that *Kevin* had found women and dropped out. I get *NNY*, and while Paul may be erratic in his publishing at times, he definitely has not dropped from sight.

(GEORGE MANN) New Topics: How about starting a Trivia & Questions category to deal with any topic:

What does the EBCA on drinking fountain

handles stand for?

Does every hobbyist keep every letter written or received so that every feud can be settled five years later?

Who set up The Covenant? Who gave that person the right to set up The Covenant?

Has there ever been a tournament to decide who is the best play-by-mail Diplomacy player?

That's all for now. Keep up the good work. Are you supposed to be neutral as editor of *HoL*? In other words, are we part of a forum with you as an uninterfering God, or are you part of the forum?

[Hey, not bad—another real try at new stuff. Keep up the fine work.

[I know that I keep every letter received, but mostly because I'm a hopeless pack rat. We had to move before I'd throw out seven year old game orders. This archive hasn't been particularly helpful for feuding, as I can't find anything anyways.

[I think Robert Sacks set up the Covenant, and I believe his authority came from having run the service in question at one time.

[Yes, there was a postal dip tournament in the early eighties and I took part in it. Many players weren't particularly happy with it, but it did come to a conclusion. Don't remember who won, Walt Blank maybe?

[I'm mostly neutral here, with a tendency toward disagreeing with everyone. If I really want to express my opinion, I'll write myself a letter and you'll know it.

[But I don't know beans about water fountains.]

(JESSE SEVERE) I've got an idea of a new topic in *HoL*—Jellyfish! Sure, you could put all the letters in it from people you really don't want to listen to.

[Perhaps we could rename the whole zeen to *House of Jellyfish*—every topic here, with the possible exception of "The Concept," has at one time or another been deemed stupid, uninteresting, or unnecessary by someone.]

(ERIC BROSIUS) Please don't feel obliged to print everything I write to you. I always assumed an editor's function involved selecting material which was worth printing from among the mounds of trash submitted (though it all sounds good to the writer). To my surprise, I find people will print almost anything I write. Where are standards these days?

[Somewhere down the scale from having some-

thing to print, it would seem. Don't worry, we don't feel obligated to print all your stuff, though it may just make it anyways.]

archives

(KEVIN BROWN) I sympathize with those folks who never throw things away. I know I must have 1000 post cards from 1984-86 when I was playing a lot of Dip. I also have a bunch of old zeens and the like. I don't really know why I keep them; I never go back and read any of that stuff. It just seems like I ought to keep it. Maybe some archivist will come and pay me for it all some day.

(KEN PEEL) As an anti-archivist, let me blow the cover on one of the most anal-retentive archivists of the east coast since 1979—Richard Dale Martin!!! Take *that*, and *that*.

[Yeah, like I actually use any of this junk. But part with it? Never!]

bad boys

(BOB OLSEN) Note for all Bad Boys fans: Bruce Geryk is alive and well (OK...he's alive, anyway). He's merely graduated from Dip to the larger universe of United, the home of so many other burnouts and has-beens, such as me. So weep not for Bruce; because he's sure as hell not weeping for you!

Bring back Julie! Down with whatsisname!

By the way, I will supply *HoL* to anyone for a fee of \$30 per issue. Hey, a guy's gotta eat! (And shut up with the cracks!)

Julie! Julie! We want Julie!

[And I'm sure Julie wants you Bob. Or rather, she wants Olga.]

(KEVIN BROWN) Geryk hasn't mellowed out as much as you think, as this issue of *Pilot Light* shows clearly. Ol' Bruce still has the Bad Boy in him. Actually I'm pleased to have him and Clark in *PL*; it keeps things lively.

(JIM BURGESS) I wouldn't call Bruce Geryk exactly mellow, but he seems to be having more fun lately. I guess I'll have to be shunned by all right-thinking Dipdomites, but he won a lifetime sub to my non-publications.

(JOHN CARUSO) Isn't it strange that Bruce Geryk's *Blunt Instruments* was a fine acceptable zeen until he ruffled the feathers of a few "big shots." He even finished second in Linsey's Poll. But as soon as he got on the opposite side of the "big shots," his zeen became trash.

[Funny, but I thought it got to be a lot better. Less inhibited, stuffy, and downright boring. Not exactly a regular thing, though.]

(KEN PEEL) John Caruso said, "A mellow Bruce Geryk? That I gotta see." Hey, mellow's not all it's cracked up to be; as Woody Allen said, "When I get mellow I ripen and rot." One of Geryk's greatest qualities is the energy with which he attacks issues and does things. What I want to see is a mature Bruce Geryk.

[Why? And you better recheck that Woody Allen quote...I think.]

burnout

(PHIL REYNOLDS) It's easy for me to say, having only been publishing my zeen for half a year now (though I did run games by separate flyer a few years ago), but I don't agree with Cal White's statement that a person should publish or play or whatever, but not mix the interests. It's going overboard on something that usually causes burnout. (Like running three zeens or playing in twenty games.) Each person is different, however. Playing games means having fun. If it isn't fun anymore, stop playing. But publishers have an extra responsibility to their paid subscribers. To up and fold a zeen with no warning or no attempt to find another GM to run one's games is detestable behavior.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) I find it interesting that several publishers who once folded messily are back now, a number of years later, carving out successful hobby pubbing careers for themselves. I feel comfortable with having those people in the hobby because they, as Cal White pointed out, are "fully alert to the possibilities of burnout," and they can point out to newer folk the pitfalls of hobby overactivity. Offhand, I can't think of any pubber who has made the same mistakes twice; can you?

Incidentally, applause to you for printing old-hand pubbers' advice about burnout. That also is—dare I say it?—a "hobby service." Sort of like

being Ann Landers Under the Covenant!

[Other than Conrad "Same Mistake Four Times" von Metzke, Rod "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow, Back Next Week" Walker, and Dennis Agosta, none spring immediately to mind. Present company excepted, of course.]

(WALLACE NICOLL) I'm now playing in less games than I ever did—not that I was ever in more than about four at any one time. The time involvement in running the zeen, and the TouchDown! which is effectively out with the zeen, is enough official hobby commitment from me. When some of my remaining spare time is given over to drawing Railway Rivals maps, or sorting out the maps and rules for the European Britannia variant, I don't feel I have the time to dedicate to playing games as well. And the games I am in (one RR in *CiA*, one AmeriFoot game—Superbowl—in Iain Bowen's zeen *Y Ddraig Goch*, and one Touchdown in *BTW*, the former *PoW!* subzeen) are all fairly straightforward. The Superbowl is probably the most time consuming, but I've got Excel set up with all my team stats, and it's then just a matter of sorting out all the tactics I'm going to use. I'm also cutting back on the games in the zeen as I want to concentrate more on running the Td! Again, I'm using a 500k Excel database for most of the table and stats production, but the report for one "week" takes me a full weekend to produce.

(KEN PEEL) Regarding Linda Courtemanche's recommendation that pubbers who know they are going to be late to send out postcards to their subbers to let them know, it is fine in concept but not said by a person who has been a serious brownout case or who has run a publishing empire of her own. With my final *Zeen Register* I was three months late, give or take a couple of weeks. My problem was not that I had the flu or was in the midst of a two month Alpine vacation. My problem was a combination of an extremely heavy work schedule (February to May in odd number years is the busiest period for me in the biannual congressional work cycle), and my insidious, progressive brown-out syndrome. Such syndromes are typically best seen in their fullness in retrospect. Someone famous once said the same thing much more eloquently, but I forget who it is: "The owl of Minerva flies only at dusk." Now, deadlines for the *ZR* aren't in themselves all that critical, as there's no game that has to be kept on a schedule. But my problem was that every weekend

since mid-February to late-May (when I actually got the damned thing out) was in my own mind the weekend before the publication weekend. Should I have sent out postcards (which would have increased the cost of a 150-200 issue publication by one-third to one-half)? I should have, I guess, if I was folding, or announcing a transfer without publication. As things turned out, I did start getting the word out on the delay through various pubbers, then found a replacement, and turned on the after-burners (when work gave me a chance) and got out a fairly good issue.

Even with all that said, *Praxis* is getting a little silly. While for quite some time I have enjoyed *Praxis* as one of the better dipzeens around, Alan has definitely violated the Peel Cardinal Rule (PCR): Try to recognize when you're hitting the wall (not always easy as indicated above), and instead of trying to push it one more mile and blowing up in exquisite pyrotechnics, better to "cut back and float, wait and see." (Ghod, I love it when people quote my pearls of wisdom!) Of course, as a long-established dilettante (I'm so serious about it, that I don't even take dilettantism seriously), maybe it came easier for me.

census

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Considering how often the players in Steve's Dip games have moved, I really am a cynic about the value of a hobby census. Hobby organization being what it is isn't, people who move are just not going to send COAs to Census keepers, Census keepers do not have the time to ferret out address changes from every zeen, and hobby members move just too bloody often to keep any Census timely for long. If all these problems could be licked somehow, of course a Census would be an enormously helpful resource for the active hobbyist. As it is, I think the amount of time and money required to really do a comprehensive Census which keeps up with the comings and goings and movings of hobby members is prohibitive. Sad to say.

Having said that, I should add it was not my intention to rag on your Census project—I've never seen it! And certainly any listing of addresses is going to have its uses. I'm just conscious that the hobby is probably giving you extremely limited help in your efforts, which is a shame, considering you're doing it for them!

[Oh, I've had few complaints with the amount of help I get—most pubbers have been very

helpful. While many dipdomites move over the course of the year, the vast majority stay in one place. So the census is a handy snapshot of dipdom, and can be updated by its individual holders as they need. I have no intention of keeping an up-to-the-minute version of the census, even if such a thing was possible. The time is significant, but the money is negligible since I've already got the hardware and software to do the job.

[And while a census may or may not be useful to the average dipper, I do the job mostly for my own edification. Since I find it interesting, I do it.]

(KEN PEEL) Regarding Cal White's musing about why there wasn't greater Canadian participation in the Census the reason was one of response, not of request. You know that I am a radical North American hobbyist (I am grateful, by the way that *HoL* agreed to print my response to Ron Brown's incredibly anti-American open letter to the Canadian hobby. I originally sent it to *The Canadian Diplomat*, where I originally read the ridiculous tome, and which never did manage to print the thing, despite a promise to do so.) When I first took over the Census, I sent out an announcement requesting sublists to all pubbers who were then listed in the North American *Zeen Register*. I don't know if Cal was listed then, but a hunka Canadian pubbers certainly were. It wasn't until you compiled the final list that I realized how few Canadian pubbers had responded to the request. I don't think that there is anything nefarious about it. The fact is that the project had been so long moribund that one simply couldn't expect a near-universal response such as you used to get when you were doing it in the first half or so of this decade. It's just that, well, news appears to travel slowly (nudge, nudge) to the provinces (wink, wink). (Hyork, hyork!!!)

PS. Do you think that the subtle parenthetical remarks above will be enough to keep Canadian pubbers from flying off the handle at my good-natured teasing?

[I thought the Canadians had thrown us all out of their Hobby?]

computers

(STEVE LANGLEY) Has anyone come up with a program to get the mail from the box before my kids get to it, sort it into games despite the player's lack of putting their game name or number on their orders, research the past issues to find out

if it is me or the player who has the unit in the right place, type in the press, and answer the phone to get the last minute called-in orders? I can handle the adjudication part myself.

(ERIC BROSIUS) If Eric Klien or someone else who knows about these things would provide a brief description of the E-mail options available to the game player, it would be a big help. Every time you open a zeen these days there seems to be someone with a question about how E-mail works.

[I'd like to defer this to our resident e-mail experts. Well, kids, how does *your* system work?]

(WALLACE NICOLL) OK, so again I disagree with Markie here again. I wouldn't have until recently. *PoW!* was a bit mix 'n' match for a time, but I've now settled on one basic face for all the body text, and play around with others for titles, but tend to use differing layouts, or strategically placed graphics to break up the monotonous grayness of wall-to-wall text. I've been moving away from single column to multi-column. The problem with Mark is he tends to use that condensed face. If he doesn't use columns the lines are so long it's difficult to read from one line to the next (I feel Cathy Ozog has the same problem with *CR*). The theory goes that a column should only be as wide as two-and-a-half lower case alphabets, which is generally about ten words or so. I also find fully justified text tiring to read.

I almost wrote 1/2 in there to see how your printer could cope! [As you can see, it can't. No fractions in these fonts. -DM] If you want a way to get fractions, I have one for Pagemaker 3! Not all the LaserWriter fonts support it though! Basically you have to redefine an unused character (say Å) as the half character in a file which is downloaded to the laser before printing from Pagemaker. If you are interested I'll copy the article and send it over. With the widening range in Mac zeens is there a likely interest in an issue dedicated to a discussion of "I Mac'd it this way"? Or even general Mac hints and tips? You use RSG4, I use PM3. What other packages do you use? I tend to use Word3 for document input, with some left over from MacWrite. The maps were drawn in Illustrator, and the headings in Freehand, which is also now my favorite over Illustrator. Drop caps are generated in a DA and imported as graphics to allow wrap around. The tables for the Touchdown! are all done in Excel (excellent macro facility to take away lots of hard work in creating a dozen small tables) and then placed straight into PM3. The latest *ZR* seems

to list half a dozen or more Maczeens. If you are interested in any of the packages I can probably let you have copies.

Many thanks for your appreciative comments about *Prisoners of War!* Prettiness ain't everything though. Pretty graphics can cover up bad writing to an extent, but the subbers will scrape off the sugar coating eventually.

Most of the graphics in *PoW* are computer generated—the titling is done in Freehand which is a really super piece of software for messing around with text. The Dip maps were scanned and then traced over in Illustrator. The notebook was an original by me, based on a bit-mapped graphic pulled from Hypercard, as was the pin. Must admit I rip graphics off from all over the place.

I recently had a fellow UK editor write to me and ask if I could suggest ways he could improve his zeen. Never heard from him before, and hadn't heard of his zeen though it had reached issue 21. I felt in an awkward position as the layout was plain but neat, and clear. The writing likewise had nothing to make bad comments about. I ended up giving some general advice, but without finding out exactly what he wants to aim for (regularity, appearance, large list of subbers...) I felt unable to offer serious comment. Hope I don't put him off by sending a sample copy of *PoW!*

[Other than making him feel like his zeen was ugly by comparison, I'm sure you were very helpful. These days I use WriteNow 2 for basic input, RSG 4.5a for final layout, Reflex Plus for my address list, a shareware spreadsheet called Biplane for a few tables I need to draw and Glue to get them into a usable format for cut and paste. I use your Illustrator map, and whatever title I can get in Freehand. As you can see, I prefer the two-column look. It's easier to read, breaks up the pages nicely, and actually fits more text on a page in the process. I almost never use graphics other than the map or an occasional comic from the daily paper—just not enough time to make/find them.]

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) By the way, I hear that Bruce Linsey is buying a Mac and learning how to run it. Macs are everywhere these days, and I get Mac stuff all the time. Makes my little IBM clone feel somewhat inferior. I still haven't given it a name; why name a computer? Car, maybe; cat, yes. But computer? Still, I have a friend in Portland fandom who names her answering machine "Zen" after the ship's computer in BLAKE'S 7. Naming a computer is no less sensible.

Speaking of which, I thought I'd answer Brad

Wilson's question about my computer, especially since I have trouble getting new shoes sometimes myself. The way SSI works is that once you apply (which I was required to do by Oregon welfare authorities when I was put on welfare at first), they keep track of the time it takes to process the application. Once it is finally approved (in my case, it took a judge to do it), they total up the "back benefits" you are owed, subtract the state benefits you have already received (the state is compensated for them), and send you the remainder. The result was that after paying my legal bills and a root canal, I had a windfall of about \$1100. My therapist had already determined that I should get a computer with the money, in hopes that I could eventually use it professionally if I ever "got better" (especially since writing is itself therapeutic). So I picked up my Amstrad in late 1987. Does that answer Brad's question? If Brad thinks I should have gotten zippo, he should write his congressman about it, not me. (Who knows, maybe he can get a special bill passed in Congress forcing me to give it back.) Of course, life isn't fair—if it were, talented young writers would have no trouble finding work. If life were fair, we wouldn't have our brains malfunctioning on us, as happens to so many people.

(KEN PEEL) I just bought myself a new toy, a John Caruso compatible computer. Haven't done anything on it yet. But I have big plans—word processing, storage, *Diplomatic Contraband*, gaming, and I plan to try Gming and programming playing Bard's Tale. Now, if only I could figure out how to type and think at the same time. (Nyork, Nyork!)

On the hyphenation algorithm in RSG! 4.5, might I note RSG's ideologically-incorrect hyphenation of "Warthog," to wit: War-thog, not Wart-hog. Given our non-wargaming generative multi-participational newage negotiational community, is that enough reason to chuck the thing, or what? (Or at least blow a couple seconds and identify the term as a "hyphenation exception?")

[Or, better still, set your hyphenation defaults to work on words no shorter than eight characters. And when *will* you participate in our multiparticipational events again, hmm?]

costs

(PHIL REYNOLDS) When I first started publishing *Dipadeedoodah!* at the beginning of the

year, I (thought I) had worked it out such that by charging 50¢ per issue to cover copying and postage costs (for an eight-page zeen), and charging about \$5 game fees, I would actually make a profit. *Ha!* No sooner did I start publishing, I had to raise issue prices to 75¢. (And this for a new, unproven zeen—I see some of the more prominent (and bulkier) zeens don't even charge that much!) My latest issue was twelve pages, toying with the "one ounce or less" weight class. It's obvious to me that I will never make a profit. (Don't get me wrong—that wasn't my reason for starting a zeen. I just saw it as a *nice* side effect.) If one wanted to make a profit, he's probably have to charge \$1.00 for every ten pages!! And what subber will pay that? Any more now, I don't bother to keep strict track of my production costs. I just do it. All I know is that the amount isn't nearly enough to squash my desire to publish.

(WALLACE NICOLL) Must disagree with Mark on his comments last time in that I feel students back in my days, and I understand even more so today, have much less disposable ~~happies~~ income than a working person. Perhaps a post graduate has more cash to hand than someone on the dole. And time too. It's not so much the availability of time, it's more to do with when that time is available. When working you are generally limited to evenings and weekends for doing zeens and other hobby stuff. As a student one may have a few lectures or practicals, but most of the day and the evening and the night are free to do what the hell you want—sounds like being self-employed. If you want to slog over a zeen, or Dip 'til dawn then fine, you have only yourself to blame if you screw up and miss essays, or fail your courses at the end of the day. There's also more going on around you at college and university. For conscientious students busy with essays and courses, I'd say to watch how you go if you want to run a zeen as well as do a degree. That's how Doug and I came by *PoW!* (formerly *Psychopath*) when the editor Mike Dean decided that his degree came before a silly hobby. Mind you he flunked the degree after all, but that's another story! When you're working you don't have to take your work home with you. At college there's this inbred thirst for knowledge that must be gleaned from the books in such a short period of time. I think Mark is wrong. I'm quite glad I didn't try to run a zeen while I was at University.

[*"Inbred thirst for knowledge"? Would you believe, inbred thirst for survival! But I felt better about blowing off schoolwork than workwork.*]

custodians

(PHIL REYNOLDS) Boardman and Miller Numbers are basically used for endgame statistics and nothing else, right? I mean, the players of a given game shouldn't really care about all this record-keeping by statisticians of a great number of games. (Though there is something to having games "registered" in the event of being orphaned, etc.) So here's how I look at it: if a custodian wants to give me a number, ok. (I'll be using Jethro Tull song titles to identify games for my players.) If another GM doesn't want one, don't use it. (This is a free country, right?) All I have to do is send a brief summary of the game to the custodian when it ends. Is this too much trouble? I don't think so. Players would probably want to see a chart of supply center changes for the game years anyway. So just copy it to a 15¢ postcard and do the hobby a favor next time, ok? As for the MNC vs MNCUC business, again, give me a number, I'll send you a game summary at the end. If one custodian wants to duplicate the work done by another one, that's their waste of time. Naturally, I support a move to appoint a single MNC approved by all. The only hope is to find someone willing and acceptable to the most hobbyists to unite the position. (That is not a self-nomination, by the way.)

(ERIC BROSIUS) Anything that needs more than three letters to abbreviate it is too complicated! How about MUC—Miller Number Custodian under the Covenant, MAC—Miller Number Custodian above the Covenant, *KZD-KGO Zeen Directory*. I'm sure others will come to you.

Do I understand that all it takes to start a feud with Kevin Brown is to say "All right, Kevin, you're running United League #466!"? A person can't be too careful these days.

[Troublemaker. You'll give people ideas....]

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) Why all the excitement over a (fill in the blank) Number Custodian (with or without Covenant) giving out numbers for games that weren't requested? James Nelson (your Abstraction II games are not to be known as UK89a2-ā and UK89a2-B), Kevin Brown (United League N-4, by my reckoning), please don't lie awake nights worrying about unwanted numbers being assigned to your games! What harm can it do? And if one of your players is really concerned about his standing in some PBM rating system (the poor kid!), it might even help keep him

interested in the game.

[...see what I mean?

[While ratings rarely matter when keeping players interested in a game, ruling games "irregular" has been known to kill interest in games.]

(KEVIN BROWN) United is not a game which lends itself to being transferred from GM to GM, despite Dan Stafford's success with Bill Becker's league. Ask any of the players in the league and they'll tell you, it's just not the same. Heck, ask yourself, you're a player there. At any rate, I think that when a United league is folded, it would be better for it to remain folded, unless the previous GM wants to resume it. Unlike Dip, different leagues have slightly different rules which will make it difficult for a new GM to run, especially if he wishes to make changes. You could potentially lose many/most of your players, giving an unfair advantage to those who remained. If a new GM wishes to run a United league, it would be better for him to start his own from scratch than to attempt to revive an old one. That is why I'm so violently opposed to United-numbers.

[True, no two United leagues are exactly the same, and what would be the point of "rating" United leagues anyway? But how would it *hurt* if the leagues were numbered, say just to keep track of them all for potential players?]

(GEORGE MANN) Once again, Sacks states that Machiavelli is numbered by the MNC under the Covenant. Why? Are other games like Civilization, Kingmaker, Chess, Checkers, etc, under the MNCUC? I thought MNs were for variant games of Diplomacy. Machiavelli is a totally different game from Diplomacy. The act of diplomacy might be a common characteristic between the games, but diplomacy can be used in Monopoly, Supremacy, and many other games. Essentially, I would like to know what non-Diplomacy games are covered by the MNC and MNCUC. And why???

[I think that the logic for the MNCUC giving Machiavelli numbers is that it *is* a variant of Diplomacy. The basic game is a pretty straight ripoff of Dip, in fact—one reason AH bought the game. It was cheaper to buy the game than sue the evil perpetrators.

[The MNCUC gives numbers to Dip variants and games with a "Significant Diplomatic Content." Thus other commercial games may be

given numbers. I think the key word here is "Significant."]

(DON DEL GRANDE) Excuse me? Where did I *ever* say (or insinuate, for that matter) that you and Julie feud with John Caruso? If you're referring to the "Caruso Convention" reference in *Vertigo*, I merely stated that I agreed with John's original statement that the MNCship should pass to successors selected by the incumbent instead of being subject to some "covenant." I have never said that Julie should not pass out MNs (to the contrary—I once asked Robert Sacks (or Charles O'Dea, alias Karel Alaric—I can't remember) for a MN, only to be told that he wasn't prepared to hand out MNs at the moment), although I say that Kremlin and Civilization are not, in any wild stretch of the imagination, variants of Diplomacy, and thus should not receive MNs. (Machiavelli, on the other hand, *is* a variant.)

United numbers? Somewhere, in a dark corner of my list of projects (don't ask how a list can have a dark corner), is my "United World Cup" (similar to the annual tournament for all of the champions of the United Leagues held in Great Britain somewhere). Originally, it was for a different game called Soccerleague, then I worked out a system to convert United teams to Soccer Replay, but that never got off the ground...yet.

(MARK NELSON) My comments on Greg Costikyan are derived from various issues of *ARDA* (a NAVB zeen published by Rod Walker at the start of the decade).

By the way, why doesn't Dick tell us all about his indoctrination from Robert Sacks?

James is, of course, a prime dipstick (I should know, as I've had to live with him for seventeen years!). There is nothing wrong with a custodian assigning a number to a game even if the GM doesn't want one. The GM doesn't have to use the number, and assigning a number keeps the records complete. Of course, there may be no point in having a complete set of records....

Is it wrong for local government to give you the right to vote even if you don't intend voting?

On another matter James is also wrong. Robert Sacks has never tried to force the UKVB onto a Custodian. This is a lie which Fred Davis started and is completely false. As far as I am aware, Robert did not make any comments regarding the UKVB during his tenure as MNC.

[The wise dipdomite doesn't necessarily believe everything he reads in *ARDA*, or other

Walker zeens. Most are *highly* political creations, expounding Walker's own unique view of any given situation, or whatever may be the expedient story at the time. Of course, Walker zeens aren't the only ones suffering from this malady.]

(MARK BERCH) John Caruso asks me, "Where did Mark Berch get his inaccurate notions that Kathy was working with the USOS." I got it from Rod Walker, the head of the USOS. Of course, by the time that *DD* was mailed, it may well have no longer been true.

When Mark Nelson wrote that Greg Costikyan agreed to use the NAVB numbers as the new MN designators, you retorted, "Amazing—I never knew you were so intimately acquainted with Greg Costikyan...are you just repeating...your indoctrination from Fred Davis." This is unfair. Davis has nothing to do with it.

In July, 1981, Greg Costikyan transferred the MNC-ship to his Vice MNC, John Leeder. The first issue of *Lord of Hosts* Leeder put out was #17. In that issue, he says that Rod and Greg "reached certain agreements. In some cases agreement in principle only was reached, and no formal document was signed. Nevertheless where agreement in principle was reached I considered myself bound by the agreement...." He listed then three items, the first of which was that the Miller Numbers would use the NAVB numbers as designators.

Writing in *Arda* #4, Rod Walker says that the use of the NAVB numbers was actually Greg's idea, that he himself initially didn't like the idea, that Greg persisted, and they settled on a slightly shortened version. Robert Sacks says emphatically that Greg did not so agree.

Since Leeder was Costikyan's successor, I think it's reasonable to assume that Leeder was telling the truth when he described the things that Greg agreed to. As for Sacks, my guess is that Greg simply didn't tell him.

In discussing a related matter, Caruso writes, "Robert ((Sacks)) claims the covenant binds all future MNCs. Others thought otherwise. When Lee Kendter ((Sr)) became MNC, he repudiated (for lack of a better word) the covenant." That's leaving some things out. The covenant was signed by Greg and Robert on June 15, 1979. It was published in *Brutus Bulletin* #92. There is no way the document could be read as binding anyone but those two. Who ever heard of a document that binds people who don't sign, anyway? Moreover, there is nothing in it which even obligated Costikyan to mention the covenant to his successor. And indeed,

Leeder was later to say that he didn't recall Costikyan ever mentioning it to him. Thus, while Caruso speaks of *Kendter* repudiating, the role of Leeder was omitted. Once Costikyan declined (or forgot or whatever) to require Leeder to agree to the covenant, it became history. Interestingly enough, while Sacks now calls Leeder and that entire line "a usurping line," at the time, he accepted Leeder's legitimacy. He did this by transferring the MNC treasury (which was \$105 US) to Leeder. How Leeder retroactively became a usurper, I don't know.

[Since when does a document bind people that don't sign it? Well, we've got this thing called the Constitution of the Great Big United States of America. You may have heard of it. Many people don't agree with what's in it, or interpret it differently, but all of us are bound by it (all of us that count, anyway). If the covenant is signed by the MNC as statement of policy for the MNC, then it would make sense that any successor is equally bound. As Robert Sacks seems to be the one with first-hand knowledge of Costikyan's intentions, it seems reasonable to take his interpretation (and the actual covenant) at face value.

[And when it comes down to it, what authority does Rod Walker have over this whole matter? Why did Greg have to reach "certain agreements" with Rod Walker? Why was Rod involved in this matter at all—as you claim, a simple transfer of custodianship from Costikyan to Leeder? Fred Davis says that Rod was the interim MNC when Costikyan quit doing the job: who gave Rod that authority? Who said Costikyan quit? Why must we rely on Rod's reporting of what happened? Why would Costikyan not tell Sacks, the man he had signed the Covenant with, things he would tell Rod? It appears that Rod just stepped up and said, "This is the way it's going to be." And thus it came to pass.

[The remark regarding Fred Davis's indoctrination was prompted by my seeing some of the things that Fred's been writing in the few British zeens I get. Propaganda, mostly. Still and all, it was out of line on my part.

[Interesting point on the "usurping" custodian Leeder getting the bank balance. Care to enlighten us, Robert?]

(KEN PEEL) Brad, you ignorant slut...there you go again!!! You claim the mantle of hobby libertarianism, but just can't go that extra mile. You proclaim the right of not seeking Boardman Numbers (or Miller Numbers of any stripe, for that

matter) for your games. Fine. But what if some of your players decide they would like to have their game(s) included in a central statistical listing of postal Dip games. Is that wrong? Or what if a statistics-keeper simply wants to do everything he can to keep his statistics complete? Do *you* have the right to tell Don Williams that *he* has no right, at no cost or hindrance to you, to publish the existence of your games and provide minimal statistics on same for whatever possible use others may or may not want to put them to? I mean, let's keep a little perspective on this. We're talking about volunteer record keeping for amateur postal gaming, not a great debate about something that actually means something in the larger scheme of things. I think that you and Dick have every right not to be criticized for your preference to refrain from "lodging" your games with Williams/Martin/Grigsby, but that others, be they the same three characters or not, have every right to do as they will with public information regarding your games, particularly at the request of your players.

Re: Mark Nelson's comments on the Miller Numbers. So who the friggin' cares if it was Greg Costikyan or one of his successors who decided that the Miller Numbers could be improved by recategorizing them? Whether it was Greg, maybe not, the important thing is that someone in the direct line of the MNC decided to do so, and then did so. Is that wrong, you dirty rotten scoundrel? And if someone else objected enough to the new system for game categorization to decide to start up an alternate MNC/UC, is that wrong as well? You seem to want to have it both ways. Confusing and inconvenient for some, yes, but wrong, or, in the words of Fred Davis, *illegal*?

Methinks Robert Sacks should be as careful about the methodology he uses in compiling his list of NYGB/KGO/Registrar of Projects associates (this was not the first time he listed me on one of his committees or lists, although I certainly cannot remember ever agreeing to do anything, and certainly have never worked on any of his projects) as I should be about making up silly parodies of NYGB/KGO/Registrar of Projects titles and undertakings. The facts are ridiculous enough, if I may quote from *HoL* #20: "The will isn't written yet. Basically, the money goes from the Trustees via the corporation and the NYGB to be distributed among the projects supported by resolution of the NYGB with the current project officer determined by the Registrar of Projects in accordance with the project's registration, the charter of the Registry, and the NYGB's guidelines." If that doesn't immediately make sense, the Trustees can, of course,

always appoint a committee to report to a commission that would recommend further study of the situation and a report of findings to an *ad hoc* panel for a final determination. Oops, there I go again....

[No, I guess it wouldn't matter if an MNC in the direct line (traced back as far as Isildur and Anárion, I believe) decided to change the numbering system. However, you make the incorrect assumption that such a thing has happened. Guess the question is whether you believe Uncle Rod had more right to seize the MNC than Sacks. I'm not particularly impressed by the arguments of either side, but Robert seems to put forth the facts better, without so much hand-waving, so I tend to believe his faction is the correct one. Nothing like a good fight over royal succession to stir the blood up. Wonder if Costikyan has any cousins in dipdom?

[I've had the same problems as you have with Robert: he never takes me off his listings. I don't mind being listed for things I'm doing, but the ex-officio stuff is a little silly.]

(JIM BURGESS) Everyone is making far too big a deal about custodian financing. In my years as US Orphan Service Director, I kept a simple ledger sheet: current balance in one column and income or expenses in the next column. The date of the transaction and a brief description (such as "3 *Envoy* letters, \$0.66 postage, \$0.15 xeroxing"—I was *always* sending *Envoy* letters) completed each line. I only charged to phone calls, xeroxing, and postage. This talk about having a financial consultant for Don Williams as BNC is sheer nonsense. Only the person taking the actions can keep the ledger sheets. On the other hand, if you have no ledger sheets or mailing records, it's nearly impossible to construct financial records later. Think about it. You can go back through phone bills, but the rest is much harder. Keith Sherwood (my partner for the first year in the USOS) kept no records and could only guess how much to turn over to me when he retired. As a result, he sent me way too much. I still have all my records, if anyone is interested.

I could be jumping the gun on this one, but maybe not. I think no one should make any kind of fuss whatsoever about Chris Carrier's latest project. I also wish Michael Hopcroft would stop being a tennis ball. Of course, I don't expect anyone (especially Mr Sacks) to listen to me. Mark Nelson is wrong, actually. The more zeen registers, the better. I'm looking forward to both the one Tom Nash will be putting out and the one I hope Brad

Wilson still puts out (despite Chris Carrier putting out Michael Hopcroft's half of it). Zeen registers have different things to say about zeens, and since zeens are what the hobby is about, they always say something unique and interesting.

[I also ended my tenures with the USOS fairly heavily in the black. If Keith sent you too much money, it's because the bank balances tend to build up pretty quickly. Wonder how much money Rod will be forwarding to the new USOS chief. Should be a couple hundred bucks by now.]

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I still think that a lot of what Carrier is doing is excessive. The action I took, which I expect to be much criticized, wasn't caused so much by any trust towards Chris Carrier as by a mistrust of Robert Sacks. As it turns out, I was in a lose-lose situation. Carrier roasted me over the coals in his reviews, and cut my best jokes. The question I now find myself asking is whether Sacks would have printed any of it given what had just happened. An answer to that question is not forthcoming. Nonetheless, I seem to be stuck in a situation I find uncomfortable. I'll be doing my reviewing for *Nutmeg* and *ZR* in the future; Tom Nash is rather happy to have me on. He didn't promise to print everything I write, but at least his judgement will be literary and not hobby-political. I don't know why some of these people dislike the *ZR*.

I'm not going to explain myself a great deal on the recent events except to say that there really isn't that much I can say. I didn't trust Sacks to run my stuff, so I went to someone who could. As to what happens next, I'm not sure I care. Hobby alignments are not as important to me as getting a job done, and I didn't think I would get that chance. Sacks will complain that I didn't give him a chance, but then why did he wait four weeks to write me after *MegaDiplomat* #15 appeared? And then only send one page of what could only be described as a threat not to do exactly what I ended up doing, which arrived after I'd already done it? Carrier and Sacks are going to battle this out, but I'm not. It's not that important to me anymore.

(ROBERT SACKS) Carrier's claims in the fake *KGO'ZD* are clearly fraudulent. I have to find out if Hopcroft did crack up and throw in with Carrier, or just made the mistake of letting Carrier know some of the comments some of us made. In the first case, I am going to have to find a replacement for Hopcroft as Co-Editor/Managing Editor. In either case, people have to be warned about

Carrier. It will be interesting to see if any of his sponsors and allies (Berch, Davis, Grigsby, Linsey, Walker) point out the total impropriety of his actions.

To Moore's comment: personalities are not the issue, no matter how much the Dark Side tries to make it. What is at issue is a Covenant which guarantees the independence of the office from the variant banks and which prohibits mandatory fees. The Dark Side claims that no Covenant can bind them, which is why no truce is possible, no unity can be achieved.

To Mark Nelson's comment: Costikyan refused to conclude the agreement with Walker *because* it would turn control of the MNCship over to the banks. I know because I was his Associate Custodian.

To John Caruso's comment: nonsense. Kendter repudiated the BNC covenant when he became BNC; he never was MNC. He was offered the position of MNC under the Covenant and declined it. He then accepted the variant banks' number custodianship. A compromise was reached whereby he was recognized and funded as acting MNC pending registration of a new Covenant, which he repudiated on Caruso's mistaken advice that I would give in. As administrator of the office I handed it over to a new applicant, and as Registrar I registered the new Covenant. This preceded Kendter passing on the variant banks' numbers to Hyatt. When Charlie stepped down, Hyatt was offered first refusal on becoming the next MNC under the Covenant to end the schism and restore unity—Julie can attest to this being what she was told when she applied—but Hyatt snubbed the offer. The Covenant side has made every attempt at unity—the variant bank side has rebuffed each of them. Both Kendter and Hyatt have declined to end the schism by becoming MNC under the Covenant; neither of them offered to appoint the MNC under the Covenant as their successor for the variant banks' numbers.

To James Nelson's comment: It is an unfortunate but natural progression for the Australian and British Assistants to the variant banks' number custodian to secede. Whether it will aid or hinder eventual reunification is not knowable. I used to refer to the overseas proxy variant banks' number custodians as Assistants because that is how one of the variant banks' number custodians referred to them. The proper title was Associate Custodian. The most recent *KGO* (June-July) took notice of the secession of the overseas Assistants. It takes me a while, but I try to get the details right.

I never told the British hobby that their Variant

Bank Custodian was not official. I stood up for a UKVB custodian whose credentials were presented to me by a representative of the British hobby against a cabal of non-British Variant Bank directors.

I have announced a new position of Asst Registrar of *KGO* in Canada, which needs a little explanation. There will not be a separate publication in Canada. The Hobby in Canada is an integral part of the Hobby in North America; however, as it has been pointed out in some Canadian zeens, they have not been getting the coverage in *KGO* they might expect. Of course, they have not been providing the information necessary for coverage, but that really isn't a sufficient answer to the problem of lack of adequate coverage in Canada. The job of the Asst Registrar will be to collect the information and forward it to *KGO* monthly (and *KGO'ZD* semi-annually).

William Lydick has expressed interest in filling the position of Orphan Games Archivist. Comments are solicited.

{Hyatt also refused to answer any letter or request for trade I sent him. Continuing the grand tradition, Lee Kendter, Jr, new custodian of the North American Variant Bank, did not respond to my request for a trade, and apparently does not want Robert to have a copy of the North American Variant Bank catalog. What fine variant bank services we have—people who want the service are not allowed to have it, and people who don't want their numbers are forced to take 'em. -JGM}

(BOB OLSEN) If I might be slightly serious for a change, I'd like to use the *HoL* podium to announce the availability of a very choice post in the Dip power structure. I'm looking for someone to be head of the USOS—that's United States Orphan Service to you, Del Grande—since I don't want the post, never wanted the post, don't *occupy* the post, and have totally non-feased the post for most of a year now.

What happened was, I think I was snookered by the notorious Rod Walker. He asked me to help him out with the USOS, so I said OK and asked for some information on how the service worked, what its policies were, etc. After one letter promising more information—this was last October—Rod stopped writing and I never heard another word from him. So, I know absolutely nothing about the USOS. Fortunately, nobody has asked for any USOS help in the eight months since...but maybe it's worth keeping this thing alive, especially since it's so much a sinecure.

Actually, I did have a candidate all lined up to take over. The plan was to give the USOS to Kathy Caruso, since she already has the OGP, which is about the same except for different letters. Imagine my chagrin when I turned the orb and scepter over to her only to find that she had given me the golden key to the OGP at the same time! So there was nothing to do but trade back and try to find some other simpleton...er, some *patriotic hobbyist* to take over.

So, I'm soliciting volunteers to take over this crucial post. If somebody wants to integrate the USOS and OGP, I'd like that fine and so would Kathy (hush, Robert). One of the old-timer has-beens would be OK, but how about some of the Young Turks? Here's a perfect opportunity for some young, eager new pubber to see people at their worst—er, ah, render Significant Hobby Service, without ever actually *doing* much. Go for it!

We want Julie! We want Julie!

[What point are you trying to make here, Bob? I think that Vince Lutterbie has since accepted the USOS position in question.]

(JEFF MCKEE) Dick, CompuServe does not use the Robert Sacks "anonymous standby" policy. We use the CompuServe standby policy. While we do not maintain an active "standby list," the players are notified (usually) as soon as a replacement volunteers.

Here's a thought on "regularity" for everyone. Think how I felt, after playing exclusively on CompuServe for almost two years before coming out into the postal hobby, that all of the games I had played there would perhaps not be rated along with these other games (the same game, Diplomacy, isn't it?) that I didn't even know about? That's bullshit. I got my draws and eliminations essentially the same way as everyone in the postal world, and I get out into PBM and find people saying it's not the same game. For chris-sakes, it's not local, it's not face-to-face, we just played by the house rules as they were written. If my games from CIS are not rated alongside PBM games, then I'll really feel wronged. We don't make a game irregular when players occasionally use the telephone, and communicating by electronic mail is a hell of a lot *less* different from standard PBM Dip than the use of the telephone.

I know it seems as though I have missed your point, Dick, but I'm really not addressing your point entirely. I talked with Don Williams at Dipcon, and he said that notations are made by E-

mail games so that people who do ratings can throw them out at their leisure. That really screws those of us who play both PBM and PBEM.

Why the hell is the BNC also an ombudsman?

[The CompuServe standby policy and Sacks' are essentially the same: open standby calls. First player in with moves gets the standby position. The only difference is that Sacks does not inform players who the standby is—too impractical via snail mail. The standby is welcome to initiate any diplomacy, of course. You're making a distinction without a difference.

[While we're talking about ratings...does the CI\$ rating system include games played by snail mail? If not, perhaps you can better appreciate why the postal ratings are as they are. And why complain that the ratings aren't mixed? If you play in both, then you have twice the ratings as those who only play by one medium.]

(JOHN CARUSO) I fail to see what Robert's anonymous standby policy has to do with the discussion about custodians. Are Compuserve games irregular? Should they be? Are phone games irregular? Is Gunboat? Are General Orders irregular? Maybe the whole spectrum should be examined.

Nobody "thrusts" a number on anyone. No GM is required to use a number. It's just part of the BNC's (and presumably MNC's) job to issue a number for each game.

By the way, a player complained his *Retal* game had no BN. The BNC asked my help and I provided him with a copy of the *Retal* games and game starts. I did this not to force a number on Dick, but to help the BNC with his records and to help out a player that requested some help.

{ Yes, but did The BNC (Heinowski) ask Dick first? No. Why not? Did you ask Dick about it? No. Why not? Did the player ask Dick? No. Why not? And why did the player request your help in particular? You all just took it upon yourselves to see that the game had a number. I'd call that forcing the issue. And then The BNC printed a nasty little editorial about how Dick doesn't cooperate with the rest of The Hobby. While you're at it, since The BNC declared Dick "out of The Hobby," why don't you decide his games are orphans and place them with other GMs too? -JGM }

[Not that I mind being out of The Hobby, mind you, as long as it doesn't affect my status in dipdom. I'd like to keep that active for a little while longer, anyways.]

dipcon

(JOHN CARUSO) When push comes to shove, I think we should put together a diverse group to discuss and decide what would be the best possible site for World Dipcon in 1990. Factors to consider: 1) accessibility to Europeans and Australians, 2) tourist sites and accommodations for those who decide to make it a vacation too, 3) reasonable costs.

[So are you advocating a split of Dipcon/World Dipcon? My vote would be to keep the two together and send them both to North Carolina.]

(DON DEL GRANDE) Here's one of the entries on the Dipcon schedule for July 30: "Dipcon Society Meeting: To...pick a site for the 1990 Dipcon...and, *if the meeting wishes*, pick a site for World Dip Con II in 1990." By the way — as far as I can figure out, there is no plan for any West Coast bids to be presented for WDC; probably just Dixiecon and the Sacks-backed bid. (Personally, I prefer Origins in Atlanta for both Dipcon and WDC, although I don't see why Sacks can't host WDC while Dixiecon gets Dipcon; after all, WDC I was not at Britain's "national championship tournament.") And Americans will not choose non-American WDC sites; the Australians have already started discussing sites for 1992. (My money is on the Victoria tournament in Melbourne; again, not a "national championship.")

(MARK NELSON) Is WDC a chimera or a farce? I don't know, perhaps Brad Wilson would care to amplify his comments?

There is no formal WDC charter, although I sometimes wonder if we need one. The present cycle of sites was agreed by the WDC 1988 Committee. We had, after all, organized the first one and took into account discussions on both sides of the Atlantic. 1988 ManorCon, 1990 USA DipCon, 1992 Australia—the Ozz hobby is unified and can decide itself which convention to use, 1994 UK—probably ManorCon.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Since I was at the Dipcon Hobby Meeting this year, I'd like to reassure "the Lords" that Peery did not—contrary to Brad's fear—rig the bids. World Dipcon '90 will be held at DixieCon in Chapel Hill not because of any Peery machinations; there were none that either Steve or I could detect. Larry gave the floor to all bidders, and DixieCon won because David Hood

had all his plans for his con and arguments against other cons lined up, presented them well, evidently struck a sympathetic chord among the voters, and swept the competition away. Steve and I put in our votes for Baltimore (we felt it an appealing location, close to home, and we didn't mind having Robert involved, but no one else joined us. While I worry that having the con in Chapel Hill—not a central location, tourist mecca, or site of a large-draw gathering like Origins—may mean Dipcon '90's turnout may be like the San Antonio turnout in '88, I am confident David Hood & Co can run an excellent con and wish him all the best.

The whole World Dipcon Letterhead brouhaha, incidentally, is absurd! (Ah, now I said it and I feel much better!)

PS: No, Larry did *not* put in a bid for San Diego, nor did anyone else.

[Glad to hear that Larry was able to control himself, much as I'm sure he'd have loved to do World Dipcon. It just seemed that the process is vulnerable to rigging, unintentional or otherwise. Larry could have cut off this whole speculative rampage by simply declaring in advance that he wasn't going to make a bid, too bad he didn't do so.

[Of course the letterhead scandal is absurd. That's the whole point. Sigh, I gotta explain everything....

[Marycon had a good turnout when we hosted Dipcon, and the tournament was excellent. I'm sure Dixiecon will do just fine, as it's similar in nature. Hope getting Dipcon won't kill Dixiecon like it did Marycon....]

(JEFF MCKEE) About Peery trying to "steal" World Dipcon for San Diego, what if he did it and nobody came? Big deal. About Peery having World Dipcon letterhead, who gives a shit? He could have the Taj Mahal letterhead if he wanted to. Lighten up, guys.

[Guess we all have our priorities. For some it's ratings, for others it's letterheads. What if we were to rate the different letterheads?]

(KEN PEEL) I do agree with Brad on one thing (maybe more as far as I know). I don't remember the Dipcon Committee ever sanctioning the use of the term "World Dipcon" by Larry Peery for his mailings for Dipcon XXII...not that it's all that big a deal, of course...probably just typical hyperbole. I expect that Larry will put on a very good regional con with a smattering of outside-of-

the-region North American participation. One of the big surprises looks to be a substantial presence by PBEMers.

Wait, I just noticed Larry stating that he sent out mailings with the World Dipcon logo as an unintentional error. Funny, I have often made the same annoying typo many times myself. (Yes, sports fans, you are in the midst of yet another of Peel's caution-to-the-winds satirical remarks.) Just yesterday, I received a registration form from Larry with the exact same pesky typo bannered across the top, sent, undoubtedly, some weeks after Larry sent his letter to you for *HoL* #20.

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) My question to Larry Peery is not why does he have World Dipcon letterhead stationery, but rather what are the *other* ten (ten!) letterheads that he regularly uses?! Inquiring minds want to know!

finding new subbers

(ERIC BROSIUS) Can anyone provide a compact list of hobby-related sports zeens (*ie*, United, Gonzo, ...)? I presume people interested in one would be interested in others. I'd like to know what's around myself.

[The *Zeen Register* and *Zeen Directory* typically list all the games contained in each zeen, though they don't list zeens so much by category. I have a feeling that there are far more sports zeens than we know of, which aren't dipdom-related.]

(PHIL REYNOLDS) Concerning Marc Hanna's comment: are you sure you have to subscribe to *The General* to place an ad in the "Opponent's Wanted" section? A couple of years ago, I sent in a notice that I would run games by flyer. I got twenty responses! And Avalon Hill charged me nothing. (In fact, they gave me a 25¢ coupon as refund for the fee I thought they charged!) Maybe their policy has changed, though.

Other ways of getting new players: try contacting local wargaming clubs (via hobby shops or universities); send sample copies to people you know are easily persuadable and have a passing interest in the game; offer variants that other zeens don't have and get them to sub to yet another zeen (yours); be a GM for orphaned games—some of these players may want to start new games. Whoops! This is turning quickly into "stealing subbers," not necessarily getting new ones into the hobby! (Now you know my strategy for new

subscribers!) Basically, keep eyes and ears open to going on in your local community, and try searching "Opponents Wanted"-type columns in gaming magazines. Contact *anyone* expressing an interest in Diplomacy (and then some who don't). I'm sure this isn't a novel idea, but could money be raised by a group of zeen publishers to take out "real" ads in gaming magazines?

(KEVIN BROWN) Hey, I found a great way to get new subbers! The answer is simple: give prizes to current subscribers to recruit you new ones. I've been giving away coaching points, but free issues or something could work just as well. If you want new subbers, get your current subbers to help you find them. Since instituting the "recruiter of the month" program, *Pilot Light* circulation is up 33%! And my standby list has increased by 300%! The best part is, most of the new folks haven't ever played United before, so they're really *new* subbers.

(JEFF MCKEE) As for Dick's mention of "new blood," (and in the publishing business I'm almost as "new" as you can get) I have to second his opinion. *HoL* is the best place I found to tell what I actually went through getting involved in this hobby of ours.

First, the gaming. I noticed a great number of names involved in a great number of games, a great number of acronyms I did not understand (and shouldn't have to dig around to figure out—I'm particularly speaking of names of zeens, not gaming abbreviations). I got into a couple of games with folks who had been around for a while, and frankly, I was then and remain largely unimpressed with the quality of the gaming.

I got every novice packet available and read them all with interest. I enjoyed S&T articles, and there was a wealth of unmolested information out there for new players on how to play the game well. The only problem was that there were so many people everywhere who didn't write. It became clear to me right away I wasn't going to make many new friends through gaming—it would have to be through letter columns and zeens.

So I started getting in more zeens, but not playing in any games. The content of so many of them were feud-related—quite depressing for newcomers to read, actually.

Let me make something perfectly clear to all of you experienced hobby stalwarts. It is much, much easier for novices and people new to the postal hobby to forgive, or ignore, the past actions of people engaged in MegaDip than for people who

feel they've been continuously burned by it. Let me ask you this: how do you expect to attract the numbers you want with mediocre gaming and constant fighting about subjects most novices will never fully understand?

As a newcomer, I find this "Dark Side" stuff most amusing. To me, propaganda never lends credibility to *any* cause.

Give me a game where all seven players sign a "covenant" (couldn't resist) to play the game to the best of their ability, to try and salvage bad positions instead of NMRing or suiciding out, to persuade and cajole the other players like it really was in 1901. Let's improve our product (I know, the next question is, "How?" By playing in only so many games as can be played well, that's how) and while we may not get more inquiries, we can at least keep people from silently, boredly, dropping out of Diplomacy.

As a side note, did you notice there are about an equal number of zeens published as there were gamestarts for regular dip in 1988?

[I agree that the quality of play isn't so great these days, probably because people tend to have more fun with the zeens/letter columns than with the actual game of dip. And with the mail so slow, it's hard to stay excited about a game for three years. You're lucky to get three good players in any one game. Some players can't play one game at a time well, what do we do with them?

[Suiciding out, or the threat that you'll do so, is a very viable tactic. I often encourage my fellow players to give it a try!

[Let me make your point another way: it is much, much harder for those people who feel they've been continuously burned by MegaDip to forgive, or ignore, the past actions of people engaged in it than for novices and people new to the postal hobby. What good is attracting lots of new blood if they're going to get burned too? We see the same unscrupulous people turning up again and again—how many times has Elmer Hinton come and gone now, for instance?]

(KEN PEEL) There were a lot of disparate comments that relate to this. I think that the surge of new pubbers must be directly related to increased interest among new players. There is a lot of talk about the impact of vitriolic feuding in the mid-eighties. One thing that is often overlooked is the fact that from the early 80s to a couple of years ago TAHGC had quietly removed the postal flyer from the game box. That decision might have been influenced by the prevalence of the extreme adoles-

cent behavior of a few years ago (which continues today, as it probably always will, at a more modest level). But the reintroduction of the postal flyer into the Diplomacy gamebox in the U.S. is probably the single most important new source of new blood. My one concern is that Larry Peery remains the only point of contact for the flyers. While he's a logical person, and seems to show no sign of lessening his interest in dipdom, we should think about what might need to be done should he ever drop out or otherwise cut back his activities substantially. Also, perhaps Larry could use some assistance in quickening responses to those who write him about postal Diplomacy opportunities—I seem to remember him saying some weeks ago that he often had a two- to three-month backlog in responding. I don't know exactly what kind of referral he makes to those who contact him...I don't remember him ever referring novices to me when I was running the *ZR*. Most of the referrals I got came from regular GMs or *Masters of Deceit* or *Supernova*. Since Larry is such a busy person with all of his hobby duties and projects, I worry about how quickly is he able to respond to all the hundreds of inquiries that come his way each year. Would a flyer correspondence assistant, someone he would automatically forward requests to for response, make his duties easier? I think it might, since he says that he has such trouble finding good zeens with game openings for referrals. There is a veritable bloom going on of such things!

gming procedure

(ANDY LISCHETT) David Hood asked for thoughts on calling good players for good standby spots, and not-so-good players for not-so-good spots. I don't like the idea. Up to a point, maybe it's okay for a GM to try to influence the style of "his" games (deadlines, headlines, GM press, and even game fees all influence style), but hand-picking standbys comes awful close to GM interference. It's not the GM's job to choose what are important positions and who are good players and who is going to lose out because the GM doesn't think his ally's position deserves a competent player.

If Dave's game reports were to announce, "I'm calling Kathy Caruso to standby for Germany because it's an important position and she's a good player, and _____ to standby for Russia because it is unimportant and he stinks," he's get a *lot* of valid complaints, and not only from _____. Also, Dave may be fair, but other GMs can (and some probably

do) just give good spots to their friends.

Better to use a rotating, random list, and disqualify standbys only for geographic imbalance or previous association with the game.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Am I the only person that remembers Jack Masters' Apple computer-generated orders in case of NMRs? (The exact algorithms were never released, although I do know that only armies could be built in case of a Winter NMR.) By the way—Dave Thorby's HRs don't deal with how the rule disallowing diplomacy during retreats and builds/removals is enforced (it is in the 1971 rules, so "it's being used"). That's the one "problem" with AREA-rated games: the GM has to forego some of his "normal" house rules to follow the rulebook as closely as possible. (For example: I don't like DIAS, but will require it in my AREA Dip game. Speaking of AREA: it's AH's policy that only the latest (1982) rules are official.)

[Nobody ever saw Masters' algorithms for computer generated moves, fancy that. My guess is that Jack sat down at his Apple computer and just started "generating" moves. Pretty slick, huh? Who says Artificial Intelligence is hard stuff?]

(ERIC BROSIUS) In response to Linda Courtemanche's letter (*HoL* #20, p 3), it would help for pubbers running games to print a "panic date" with each issue, especially for the help of players new to the zeen (see! I'm learning). When two or three weeks have passed since the last deadline, players start to wonder whether their copies were lost in the mail or whether the zeen's just late. You don't want to miss the deadline, but you hate to harass the poor pubber, who's probably busy enough trying to finish the late issue.

The panic date would be the earliest date on which the deadline for the *next* issue could possibly fall. You'd know you have to contact the pubber as the panic date draws near.

People who are experienced know that many zeens are slow-paced, and don't worry when *Retaliation*, *Rebel*, *Perelandra*, or *Fiat Bellum!* is a little late arriving. On the other hand, if you don't get your copy of *Graustark*, *KK*, *Bushwacker*, or *Grab Them Dots Now!*, there's a good chance something is amiss. Beginners have no way of knowing this, and any help the pubber can give is welcome.

In response to David Hood: On the one hand, if you save the best standby positions for the most active players, you're likely to hear complaints of

"Not only is she a great player, but he saves all the best positions for her! No wonder she wins all the time" from the other players. This wouldn't be a fair criticism to bring down on someone.

On the other hand, your system should encourage players to put their best efforts into their standby positions so as to convince you they deserve a good one the next time. There's something to be said for that.

Eric Klien views guest GMs as a way to publish without having to GM games. I'd prefer to view Eric Klien as a way to GM games without having to publish. One man's meat is another man's poison....

[If you don't get your copy of *Graustark*, *KK*, *Cheesecake*, or *Bushwacker* on time, it's because the publisher has stepped in front of a large, fast-moving truck. If you haven't gotten *HOL* or *Retal*, you just haven't waited long enough. What good's a panic date? Really though, this ain't such a bad idea.]

(JEFF MCKEE) My first two game years are complete in *The MetaDiplomat*, where I have been running a Round Robin tournament combining adjustments with the fall moves. It hasn't been easy—I've had to call people and remind them to include their retreats and builds. I've had a few GM removals, and a few NBRs, but overall, it has been a success. In the fifteen or so games I have GMed cover to cover using British style, I have had exactly *two* requests for season separation.

I'd rather have my units all be ordered to hold than have Avalon Hill's Computer Diplomacy order them if I NMR.

My big beef with WAP is that I still negotiate with players who NMR, and I hate what happens when I think I have convinced them to do something and then they NMR and continue to do the same thing, rendering the entire turn's diplomacy useless.

Guest GMs are great! I started my career as a guest GM, and it's not a bad attraction to keep players who have been around for a year or so from getting bored with the hobby. CompuServe even pays its GMs for their services. If it weren't for that, I might have dropped out long ago.

[Why not negotiate with the standby as well as the NMRing player, and submit orders conditional on who gets the position? I allow this, as do many other GMs.

[I've guest GMed a couple games, and overall the experience has been a positive one. A few

rough spots, but generally smooth sailing.]

(JIM BURGESS) Jim Meinel is wrong. Press is loads of fun to type. I just wish people would send me more of it, black as the heart of Dipdomites. Actually, I find the attitude toward press to be the largest differentiating factor among GMs. To encourage press, constantly promote it, add your own voice, and above all, mix it up! Put the like-minded press together and link it to make it read like dialogue as much as possible. This takes effort, but can be well worth it in making the game more fun for you and the players. Oh yes, all my games are black press, and I love it. Just remember, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

I'll throw my system into the mix for John Barnes to consider. I publish every three weeks on real-time deadlines (if one deadline is on the 1st, the next one is 21 days later on the 22nd). Then I run four seasons to a year: Autumn and Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. That automatically puts each fall and spring season six weeks apart.

Admittedly, not much goes on in most summer seasons, but you can always write press! Late in games, I offer players the option of speeding up the game. This can effectively turn the endgame into a three-week game. I also designed my Spy Dip variant to it runs on the four seasons to a year schedule. I also stagger the spring seasons to balance the adjudication load from issue to issue. It works for me, and I don't hear too many complaints from players except that I'm late sometimes.

international subbers

(WALLACE NICOLL) Some games are more suited to international play, especially where there isn't a vast amount of diploming to do. Railway Rivals seems fair so long as players are willing to take a gamble for their joint runs—they can always put in conditionals to say that they'll accept offers from players in an order of priority, and if none go on their own. The Touchdown! is OK, but seems to be likely to cause problems when it comes to trading players between teams when it is more than just a straight swap—by that I mean two players for one and a draft round pick. Done over the phone you can haggle, but when you must rely on the post things can get well drawn out. As for international dip, I can only comment on one game I've had with Cathy O'Zog. Just keeping in touch was enough to allow Cathy to retain a foothold in the game—well, she is cute...and American....[And happily

married! -dm] Out of a total of 120 odd subbers and traders, over 20% are from overseas—mainly US and Canada, but also Australia, and Germany. The range of countries we have sent *PoW!* to over the years is quite wide, and always seems to impress non-gamers when I'm trying to explain the world-wide nature of the hobby. Countries include UK, Eire, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Finland, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and South Africa. Can anyone beat that? Oh yeah, I forgot California! We may sometimes break even with UK subscriber copies, but never charge anywhere the going rate for overseas recipients. Just having them there on the address list is good enough. To have them involved is much better. At the moment we have about six or seven overseas players active in the zeen. James Nelson mentions foreign language zeens. I recently received the first couple of issues of a Spanish En Garde! zeen—is this the first Spanish zeen? I can make out some of the phrases used, but on the whole can't understand too much of it.

letter columns

(JIM BURGESS) Michael Hopcroft says of *The Scribblerist*: "If Mark can only keep it up, he's got a classic on his hands." Well, unfortunately, he's not. *HoL* has the best lettercol in Dipdom at the moment, and its future is precarious (at least in terms of frequency). *Benzene* is six months behind in printing letters. Those are about it, except for a few of us like Pete Gaughan, Linda, Brad, Don Williams, etc, who are doing a little bit. We have a lot of people doing a little bit. I prefer the mega-letter zeen (*Brutus Bulletin* is the classic example of what I like), but no one has the time. Maybe we should pay Michael Hopcroft to do it. No editorial comments from him, just letters every two weeks. Linda may whine and complain about John Caruso's comments concerning her letter topics, but I see a subtle shift. I even wrote to *High Inertia* for the first time in a while. To run a letter column, you must encourage people to write what they already want to write about.

[Precarious? Us? Not if you're looking for a bi-monthly to quarterly letter zeen. We are as regular as toast. Why should Michael just print other people's junk when he's the most prolific writer in dipdom these days himself? *Scribblerist* is dead, *Praxis* seems likewise, but it looks like some of the new kids are picking up the slack. Maybe not all in one place, but a little bit in a bunch of different

zeens. *Benzene* may be slow, but the letters don't seem particularly dated when they're printed.]

organizations

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Organize this hobby? Get real!!

(ANDY LISCHETT) I liked your USDA idea in *HoL*, at least up to the Prime and Choice members part. Back when Eric Ozog was doing *Diplomacy by Moonlight* we planned to collaborate on a spoof of the NADF, but never got beyond the name: the Diplomacy Organization of America.

(BOB OLSEN) Bring back Julie! We want Julie! Down with the Great Satin!

I have a real beef with you. I really can't see that your United States Diplomacy Association proposal has much meat to it. It is—in a word—so much bull, and if you expect us to be cowed by it, you're crazy! If you want to steer this hobby right, don't build for us this Golden Calf and try to milk it for all it's worth! We don't need these stock solutions, and we can't be buttered up by someone who pretends to be the cream of the hobby, but is in fact churning out a bunch of tripe!

(By the way—the correct sequence of officers should be: Prime—Choice—Meathead—McDonald. Right??)

Julie would have never made such a ridiculous proposal. Bring back Julie! OK, so she had to endure thirteen pages of Berch's pedantic droning and immediately sank into a coma...she should be awake again by now, surely?

[Oh hit me, hit me harder! I knew you'd take the bull by the horns, O Great Babirusa.]

(JIM BURGESS) I like the initials USDA. Then we can be declared Grade A beef and I can think of all sorts of awful agricultural puns to sprinkle through my writing. I promise to try to restrain myself, though you didn't. The USDA could enact zeen subsidies where certain publishers are paid not to plant, er, publish. Others, like Michael Hopcroft, could apply for grants. Of course, the USDA will need money, lots of it. Well, coincidence of coincidences...I see the Diptax mentioned. I think we should start with a debate about funding. An easy way to define members in good standing is by payment of their taxes. Semi-seriously, the idea of two debating choice officers is an excellent one. It might work. I'd play along.

(KEN PEEL) Re: the USDA. The Prime, The Choice and The Supernumerary (Safeway would probably prefer using the name for its new tertiary grade: The Lean)...but what would the organization actually *do*? Oh, yeah, sorry. Oops, did I let the cat out of the bag? Never mind....

[Ken, Ken, Ken...why do you embarrass me like this? What would the USDA *do*?! Why, debate the great issues of the day, of course! Which is about all that can be expected of any organization.]

(WALLACE NICOLL) Bah humbug! Some organization is needed to sort out fliers for Dip boxes, to arrange Cons etc. I don't think there has to be an official body representing the whole hobby. In the UK any attempts to set up a hobby-wide organization is met with the usual flak as mentioned by John Caruso at the foot of page 19 last time. Look what happened when someone recently put forward the idea of prize money being awarded at one of the two big Dip tournaments....

(JEFF MCKEE) Is that really you, Dick? As you said, "A common refrain among the newcomers when faced with the turmoil of dipdom is, 'if only we had a proper organization, then all our problems would go away.'" My first issue of *Meta* started off that way, but that's not what I really meant when I did that. I wanted there to be a place where the hobby issues could be discussed without all of the personal squabbling, name calling, propaganda, etc., and I didn't see one. So far, so good. Kathy Caruso just replied to something written by Bruce Linsey and World War II did not start. Everybody reading this is capable of discussing important hobby issues. Maybe I'm missing a zeen where people discuss the issues and leave their personal squaffaws at home (*HoL* is better than I expected and a pretty good product overall).

An organization is never going to solve the problems, though. There will always be anarchists like yourself; there will always be unknown Dipimaterial (the previously unheralded *Diplomacy Today* is a good example); an organization will never achieve "control"; and so, why bother?

One thing that would be nice about organization is that people who are getting screwed by "they way things are done" can get a public more-or-less universal forum to bitch and moan and try to get something done. For example, the PBEM vs PBM ratings thing I mentioned earlier can really only be taken care of two ways, neither of which is satisfactory: first, convince the current BNC that

the games should not be labeled as "significantly different" and thus encourage ratingsmasters to include the games on par with "typical" PBM games (which may then be reversed by subsequent BNCs); second, get a PBEMer to figure the entire ratings database the as s/he sees fit and have the results subsequently ignored by the hobby at large.

But overall, organization would never work in a hobby where so many labors of love are present. Your names of Supernumerary, Prime, etc., sound every bit as ridiculous as the NYGB, Institute for Diplomatic Studies, etc. Actually, you had some really good ideas in your paragraph (however disguised by the silly names you chose), but you know that nobody will ever agree to be governed by such a body, so why not just give it up?

[Give it up? That would require that I took the proposal seriously in the first place. No can do. Could it work? Maybe, though the degree of formality would be more appropriate for use in a single zeen than as a dipdom-wide organization. Maybe we'll try it here as a form of deadwood roulette. Now that's an idea....]

(ROBERT SACKS) Do you think it would be appropriate to print the Articles of the Alliance in their current draft form?

[No, nor any other form.]

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) The problem I see with attempting to create a hobby-wide organization is that no one has come up with a Statement of Purpose for such an organization that would either give people a concept to rally around or outline the clear benefits of joining the organization. People join organizations either because they identify with the Purpose of the organization (joining the ACLU because you feel strongly that people's civil liberties need to be fought for to be preserved) or because they desire the Benefits that come from joining the organization (joining the USCF so that you can play in UCSF tournaments, get *Chess Life* magazine, and have your chess-playing skills rated against other USCF members).

None of the dipdom-organizing ideas that I have seen so far have given me any reason, either ideologically or practically, to support them. "To bring some semblance of order to this chaotic hobby" isn't good enough.

[Well, what would be good enough for you? It's a shame you missed out on the PDO in its prime. You would have made a fine Kommissar.]

out of dipdom

(KEN PEEL)...shall return. (Hey, it's the only section I ever started in *HoL*!) Next issue I'll try to give a low-down on the seven novices I have running in my all-diplomat game in *Diplomatic Contraband*!

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I'd be sorry to see "Out of Dipdom" lapse. All Dip and no other stuff makes Jack one paranoid dude, man.

Right now the things that stands out is my recent activity in another field of gaming, that of stat sports gaming. You know, Strat-O-Matic and the like. You'd be amazed at some of the things I've been getting lately. The oddest thing is that I've been semi-invited to join my first postal league. It's a pro basketball loop—based in England! This should be very interesting, not to mention doing wonders for my postal bill. It's an entirely different world, really. No stabs and no lying, just instruction sheets and dice. Indeed, honesty is the prime requisite of a postal sports gamer. Because he is running the game with an absent opponent, he must follow that opponent's instructions explicitly and *never* "fudge" results in his own favor. This means taking every die roll as it comes, whatever the result (and no, you can't play three games just to get one result you like!). Are you ready for that kind of responsibility?

polls & awards

(GEORGE MANN) The one thing I despise is people who complain and bitch about things without offering a solution. Thus for all you Runestone bashers I ask, what is your idea of the "perfect and correct" poll? Explain what it should be, how it should ask whatever, and how it should be run. Once that's settled, maybe someone will run this perfect poll. What is my idea of a "perfect" poll? Just have respondents send a single "winner" for each category (eg, Best Zeen, Worst Zeen, Best GM). Don't list the possible choices or have them give ratings on a 1-10 scale. Let them choose from their particular world of zeens, GMs, etc. I guess people will argue that some voters see fifty zeens while others only see a few. Well, I never said I was God's answer to Diplomacy Polls.

[What's my idea of a "perfect" poll? One that doesn't rate me or the zeens I publish, or attack us for not participating. That was simple, eh?]

(MARK NELSON) Your problem, Dick (*viz* Linsey/Poll) is that you have never *explained* anything—put some good feud material in though.

[The explaining part happened long ago, and repeating it endlessly is boring both to myself and all the folks who've seen it 98 million times. And what is there to explain, really? I just don't want to participate or be rated. Nobody's *ever* adequately explained to me why this is such a horrible thing.]

(JIM BURGESS) Timothy Moore seems to be asking for a Marco Poll format where you choose your five favorite zeens. *Period*. Why won't your feelings about the other complicated format stop you from voting? Or you could vote for your five favorite zeens only. To recap: those of us who don't like the Runestone format don't like it because the pressure (or perhaps the opportunity) to vote for every zeen that you've seen encourages negative voting. Negative voting should be discouraged in a hobby on the idea if you don't have anything nice or constructive to say about a zeen, you should say nothing at all. By definition, a low number is not constructive criticism. The current {sic, former} Runestone pollster, on the other hand, has stated that he prefers negative voting for completeness, a complete ranking of all zeens. Oh yes, a pubber is an amateur, Mr Nelson. Let's say I was sick for six months and didn't publish my zeen. Now I'm trying to rebuild my enthusiasm for publishing. I know (because this has happened, including a case when a pubber was dying of cancer) that I will get a low ranking because of my illness-related delays. I just might prefer not to be reminded of people's dissatisfaction. To reiterate: this is a hobby, and a pubber should have the right not to be graded, and more than that, not to be publicly graded. As far as I'm concerned, the burden of proof is on the pollster. People leave the hobby over bad Runestone poll results. Maybe they shouldn't, but they do. Nobody leaves the hobby because they only got one (or no) mention in the Marco poll. These things build resentment and make people feel helpless. Then maybe these people do things they shouldn't do, but the first cause is the potential for negative voting in the poll. Sorry, Dick, for going on about this issue, but I'd like to know from people like Mark Nelson why they support destructive criticism.

(DON DEL GRANDE) If any pollster feels that a vote is not "honest," he has the right to disallow it, although he should ask the person about the accused voted(s). (Similar to sending back the

"Zero for *Retaliation*" votes a few years ago, although Bruce should have made it clear that any zero votes would have been accepted; by his not saying this, the voters assumed that a zero vote was now invalid.) This *especially* applies to the Runestone Poll, since it's run on an average scale and not "popularity contest" style (like the Marco Poll used to be — and, I think, still is; by "popularity contest" I mean that a zeen/GM/whatever can only do better by getting more votes, so more popular zeens/GMs/whatevers do better). I must say that Bruce did go one step too far in his involvement when he tried to get people to vote because "it would be nice" to reach a certain figure. No one should be pressured into voting, as it usually results in some sort of grudge vote.

[What if a pollster feels a vote is "dishonest" simply because it doesn't agree with the way he would vote in that instance?]

(WALLACE NICOLL) *Diplodocus*: Wasn't that a UK zeen?

The Cream Shall Float Up to the Surface: After seeing one issue of it, I guess I didn't feel it was worth the few dollars being asked for it. The UK poll results come out in a normal-sized zeen which features a preference matrix in small print on big paper, the average score vote, and perhaps a table of the votes cast for each zeen—no graphs, no individual page long analysis of how one zeen did against another—gads, it gets like it's an analysis of an election!

ratings & scoring systems

(DON DEL GRANDE) To which "faction" does IDTR belong?

(ERIC BROSIUS) I agree with Tim and Brad. If two players go to a tournament and one gets three two-way draws while the other wins once and is eliminated twice, which one did better? My money is with the guy who won! The idea of the game is to win, and he did win at least once—he succeeded. The other guy failed to win at all. If only one player wins at a tournament, shouldn't she win the tournament? Of course, she may have played on a weaker board, etc, etc, but counting a two-way and a three-way as equal to a win seems like going overboard. There's nothing shameful about a draw if you can't win, but there should be a reward for the gambler too.

(JEFF MCKEE) I'm going to take Mark Nelson's ideas a step further. I'm against ratings systems which take into account the supply center holdings of players involved in draws, period. If you're going to allow conceded draws, what's the difference between 14 and 8 centers, if the 14-center power agreed to include the 8-center power in the draw.

Dipcon was the usual madhouse of players who had agreed to draws sticking around and deciding how they were going to divide up the remainder of the supply centers to increase their score in the tournament. To me, if an alliance (or set of players) bring the rest of the board to its knees, then more points should be awarded to the players who bring the board to its knees in the *least number of game years*. There aren't many players who enjoy playing bad positions out to the end, and of those people, how many of them will be voting for draws?

An idea for a "final board" might be to have the Best Country players each play their best country on the "top board." Not necessarily for the tournament championship, mind you, but as a separate category. If in 20 tournament games, the best Austria is a 12-center 4-way draw, then shouldn't that player be able to play his Best Austria against the best of the other countries?

(STEVE LANGLEY) If "ratings" are really useful to rank the players, then the most useful system would be one that was just the inverse of the one described lastish. Novice players should have their rankings greatly affected by the outcome of their games, the more quickly to place them in the approximate level to which they belong, while the more experienced players should get a smaller change in position from their games. The changes could even be determined by the differences in the rankings of those in the game. Thus, if a low-ranked player did well in a game with a group of highly-ranked others, his ranking would jump more than if he did well in a game with other low-ranked players, while a highly-ranked player would not get much of a boost from winning a game full of low-ranked opponents, but would have to beat people ranked even higher than himself to move up quickly in the rankings. Sounds complicated to me.

[Sounds like the AREA ratings system run by AH, or the chess rating system.]

(PAUL MILEWSKI) James Nelson is wrong in implying that a system which takes into account the relative abilities of your opponents is anything

more than a variation of one which does not. Both are based on a subjective assessment of the relative value of the various outcomes. All the approach he favors does is to weight the subjective value of the outcome according to the caliber of the opposition faced, the proxy for which is the track record of your opponents in other games against still other opponents of their own. One might observe parenthetically that a given outcome in a game played against "battle-hardened and experienced Dip players" would add more to your standing than the same outcome in a game "full of novices" despite everyone's play in the former being dull and plodding compared to everyone's being imaginative and resourceful in the latter. For the player mindful of his rating, there would be an inherent inducement to take risks playing against novices but to play the odds against veterans. Even arguing that some people have higher or lower aversion to risk than others do, in the long run courting disaster in the company of those most able to capitalize on your misfortunes would militate against making it your usual practice.

Of course, the acid test to which a rating system can be put is to predict how a player will fare in the *next* game in which he plays. No information about a player's past successes or failures can predict that with absolute certainty. What we are discussing is a probabilistic endeavor in which we conveniently try to minimize random error without introducing bias (systematic over- or underestimation). We should not dismiss from consideration the possibility that a particular person, perhaps due to an idiosyncrasy of undetermined origin, does better against veterans than against novices, against certain people rather than against strangers, against men than against women, against Canadians than against Yanks, etc. Logically, we should consider factors the significance of which is not intuitively obvious and eliminate them only if they prove to be of no predictive value. Of course, one must avoid what is called "saturating" the model, for which mathematical tests exist. Also, correlations can exist between predictive factors and their associated events for which no causality can reasonably be inferred.

Be that as it may, in the same way sexual confidence (and performance) are enhanced by career success, predicting a player's probable outcome in his next game from his past results ignores the "whole" person. This seems particularly worth remembering when considering many active players are leading lives of transition from college student to working stiff, from soldier to civilian, from bachelor to husband, etc, transitions too

profound not to have some effect on how the player does in his next game. To think otherwise is to confuse man with machine.

[What does "saturating" the model mean?]

recipe ready

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I have received so many off-the-record letters lately the mind boggles. Whether it's personal advice or secret dirt on people, people seem to be sending me a lot of things they don't want me to print. And I don't really mind. There are times when I don't want to know what's being said about me behind my back.

(WALLACE NICOLL) NFP, etc: I've only received this a couple of times—one from a friend who gets the zeen freebie, but who's not in the hobby as such—I use it as a means of keeping her in touch with what I'm doing when I can't fit in a letter. And the other has been, when someone was wanting to put together a package and he didn't want any pre-publicity in case it didn't work out. In both cases, if the request is made I honor it.

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) I have no problem with receiving (and honoring) letters marked "Do Not Quote." It's a common practice in SF fandom, and especially useful when writing to zeens which would normally print the entirety of a letter of comment, unless the author indicated otherwise. (For example: after going on about various reasons for hobby inactivity, a correspondent adds that in addition to various work, school, etc, pressures, his grandmother has been diagnosed with liver cancer. He considers the editor a good enough friend that he wants him to know about this problem, but doesn't want the zeen's entire readership to know his family's medical history. So the letter writer adds that the part about his grandmother should be DNQ.)

However, I can't recall ever marking one of my own letters DNQ, in whole or in part. I don't feel a need for the label, but I can see where someone else might. As an editor, I simply try to use good judgement on whether or not something *not* otherwise marked was indeed intended for publication.

(ERIC BROSIUS) Isn't it possible that the writer knows a letter contains sensitive information, but isn't sure that fact will be apparent to the publisher? In this case, a NFP/DNQ/... label would protect that information without requiring a long

discussion of something the publishers would prefer not to suffer through. (I'd certainly prefer to be spared the long gory details of feuds whenever possible.)

(MARK NELSON) I agree with Cal: I wouldn't quote from a NFP/OTR letter as a matter of courtesy. There can be a legitimate use for NFQ letters—perhaps the content is about a real life problem and the writer wants some advice but doesn't want the letter printed?

[If you know and trust someone in Dipdom enough to be discussing your real life problems with them, why would you need to tell them not to print your letter? On the other hand, if you're the type of person who tells your problems to strangers, what do you care if they spread it to a few more strangers?]

(MARK BERCH) John Caruso asks, "One has to wonder how many opinions Mr Berch has swayed by printing inaccurate material." Let's not get carried away, John. The quote appeared three times in my letter, and only in one of them did I miscopy the word. Moreover, my argument depended on the *correct* wording, not the incorrect one.

Yes, I sent Julie a letter noting the copying error (actually, it was she who spotted it in the first place, noting that my argument didn't make sense with the wrong quote). I sent a copy to John as a courtesy, that's all. It was not an attempt to "cut me off." Could we just drop the whole business of assigning motives?

[I'm all for it.]

right of reply

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) John Caruso has got it right—it's the "*privilege of reply*," a courtesy extended by the publisher to a party that feels it has been wronged, and anyone who thinks that it is actually their right to force a publisher to publish a response of theirs to any slight, real or imagined, doesn't understand what Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press is all about. The only "*right of reply*" is that they, too, have the freedom to publish their side of the story if they so desire, and also that they have the protection of the law if what they wanted to reply to was truly slander or libel (not that I'm advocating suing Dip publishers!).

(MARK BERCH) Julie printed my response to Caruso in *OPERABLE*, but none of my letters for *HoL* were run at all. I know you got them because you made a passing reference to them on page 5. Was this just an oversight? Were they bumped to the next issue? Or have you decided not to run them? I'd like to know, because these three letters were all in response to what appeared in #19, and if you aren't going to run my responses, then there's not much point in my writing them.

I would still like to know if you plan to run my previous unprinted letters or not. If you don't plan to, could I have them all back? And could you explain why, for example, it's OK for Kathy to run all that *garbage* about John Fisher, but it's not OK to run a letter pointing out the inaccuracies in that account. Why is it OK for you to tell about how I "supported an earlier zeen..." but not OK for me to point out that I did no such thing.

I would like to know why you would not run my previous letters sent for *HoL*.

For example, in #19, Kathy Caruso had a letter in which she harshly criticized John Fisher, saying he had joined the hobby on Linsey's request, spent a fortune on gamefees, etc, and dropped once he had voted in the Runestone Poll. My letter pointed out the various ways in which this was inaccurate, and indeed, if John is telling the truth, Kathy knew it was inaccurate. In your 7/31/79 letter to me, you say you want "constructive comments." Please explain why attacking John Fisher is OK, but defending him is not being constructive.

And you, Dick, said I had a "thinly veiled smear campaign" that I used a charge to "force" you to shut down *HoL*, and that I supported a zeen with a similar policy. Why did you not print my response, in which I described my relationship with *Peerless* and showed how this was *not* support in any way. It is fair for you to say things about me and deprive me of the opportunity to explain they are not true? {over and over and over and over}

With regard to my letters, you say this "seems like *OPERABLE* material to me." It was all in response to *HoL*, not *OPERABLE* stuff. But *OP* goes to pretty much the same set of people, right? So why not run it all there? I won't be thrilled with the delay, and it's in the wrong place, but that's better than no publication at all. That would resolve the matter.

You also mention its length. Julie handled this before by breaking it into parts, with a notice to that effect. Why not do the same here? This is less desirable than putting it all into *OP* because it introduces even more delay, but again, it's better than no publication at all. In that case, I would like

the 4-13 letter (about John Fisher) and the 4-10 letter (about *HoL* and *Peerless*) and the business about the *DW* mailing list (last part of 4-28 letter) treated as having the highest priority. And while I'm at it, the first paragraph of the 4-28 letter is now stale, and I'd prefer it not be run at all.

Thus, I ask you again to reconsider. If you will still not run them, then please return them.

{I put out issue #19 to which your letters responded. Dick is now editor of *HoL*. He has no obligation to maintain any of my editorial policies. Moreover, of all these issues you are essentially demanding your "right of reply" to, only one of them directly involves you—most of them involve...guess who? -JGM}

[OK Mark, I grant that perhaps you weren't so enthralled with *Peerless* (though since I'm not going to look back through old stuff to see exactly what was said, I reserve the right to change my mind again). However, the quote in question referred to both Berch and Linsey, so you're not the only one in question here. And you did whip the bogus elitism issue up quite nicely, didn't you?

[All that "garbage" about John Fisher is true. At least as far as the facts are concerned—their interpretation is open for question. I doubt he joined dipdom at Linsey's behest, just to vote in the poll. His choice of zeens appear to have been influenced by Linsey in a somewhat duplicitous manner. I don't see this as being a particularly big deal. I don't see how this is an "attack" on the long-gone John Fisher. (He signed up for a *Retal* sub at about the same time, and moved leaving no forwarding address soon after, by the way.)

[No, I don't plan to run all your letters here. They're too long, and too boring. If Julie wants 'em for *Operable*, she can run 'em. Not that I'm trying to discourage your writing here, I'm just reluctant to print it unless it's more to the point.]

women

(ROBERT SACKS) I have to disagree with John Caruso about how the men have all the positions of power: Kathy Caruso is Director of Orphan Games; Melinda Ann Holley is publisher of *Everything*, the BN'zeen; Julie Martin is MNC under the Covenant.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Having met Tim Moore and Audrey Jaxon at Dipcon, I can attest that they are not one and the same person. Unless, of course, one rented the other for the

weekend....

(BOB OLSEN) My theory is that sexism (and racism, which is about the same thing) are due mainly to *deep-seated feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy*—mostly quite justified in the cases cited—and hence fairly meaningless except for their confessional content.

We want...(fill in the blank). Down with (you know who...you *are* who!)

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) David Munzenmaier would like to see people's ages printed on the address list...*No! Very Bad!* Postal gaming is one of the few ways that you can interact with other people without most of the psychological baggage that invariably comes from meeting anyone face-to-face. A fourteen-year-old black urban youth can strike up a friendship with a middle-aged white Midwestern dentist, a physically handicapped college student can negotiate for control of Europe with a high-school dropout housewife—and the only thing that they can use to judge each other is the words that they express themselves with. Oh, it's far from a perfect world—the average male gamer's attitude towards woman gamers comes through very clearly in print, for example, but listing ages would only make it worse. David, if you want to reply to the new player's apparently silly and immature remarks with casual sarcasm, feel free to do so. If you want to cultivate that player as a future ally and friend, that might not be the way to go about it. But whatever you do, judge the player on what he wrote to you; and remember that what you write back is on what you will be judged.

Both the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman in the Diplomacy hobby stem from the same causes: women are in a minority here, and furthermore, a majority of the majority consists of young (high school- or college-age) male gamers, a group well-known to have problems relating to women on a number of levels. Therefore, a new (or even well-established) woman in Dipdom gets a lot more attention than would a man: their letters are read with special interest, they are courted (both figuratively and literally) by publishers, their zeens are remarked upon. This spotlight is considered an advantage by those who enjoy the attention, but along with that attention comes the sophomoric "humor," sexual innuendo, and outright prejudice that has to be weathered.

[Not bad. Just enough room to put in the survey on the back page. Then on to another new topic....]

The Postal Gamesplayers' Questionnaire for 1989

The Postal Gamesplayers' Yearbook is produced once a year. This questionnaire will provide information on you and other postal gamesplayers plus some statistics on the hobby. Should you not wish any answer to be printed put by the side DNQ (Do Not Quote). Your entry to the yearbook is FREE. The data is to be held on a computer file. Your agreement to this is a necessary condition of entry.

Section 1: Personal Details

1. Surname _____
2. Forename(s) _____
3. Age in years at 1/1/90 _____
4. Sex _____

Section 2: Address Details

1. Home Address _____
2. Home Post Code _____
4. Home Phone Number _____
3. Term Address _____
4. Work/Term Phone Number _____

Section 3: Hobby Details

1. How long have you been playing games by post in years _____
2. What is your favourite Postal Game _____
3. How many zines do you receive _____
4. Which of the following do you consider you belong to
 - a) The Postal Gaming Hobby _____
 - b) The Postal Diplomacy Hobby _____
 - c) The Postal Sports Gaming Hobby _____

Section 4: Conventions

1. Do you plan to go to any conventions in the next year YES / NO
2. If YES are you prepared to give a lift YES / NO / NO CAR
3. If YES to the last question:- Petrol-Sharing/ Free/ Other _____

Section 5: Face to Face Gaming

1. Are you interested in Face to Face gaming YES / NO
2. If YES, where would you be prepared to travel to _____
3. What type of games are you interested in playing _____

Section 6: Non-British Entries

This is a modified version of the questionnaire for non-British postal gamers. If you are interested in learning more about the British hobby or want some British trades, then please send a short note about yourself and any zine/sub-zine you run.

Only your name and sections 2 & 4-6 will be printed. The rest will be treated confidentially and only used in statistical summary form. Please return the questionnaire to Jan Niechwiadowicz 35 Poplar Crescent, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury SY3 0QD, England or to any Zine Editor who is willing to forward it. The deadline is 4th November. If you would like a copy of the yearbook either enclose a cheque for two pound or use the international subscription exchange. The yearbook should be available from 27th November.

new topic: in dipdom

Taking a page from Linda Courtemanche's *High Inertia* (before she got so serious, and whose fault it that?), this month's topic should be upbeat and fun for everyone. A "lite" topic, if you will. We'd like to know about your most memorable experience in dipdom. Was it at a particular game, face-to-face or postal? Was it the strategy and tactics of the game, or the press, or someone you met in the course of the game that made it special? Have you ever met someone at a con who really made an impression on you? Is there a particular issue of any zeen or a particular article that still stands out in your mind years later? Did a phone call change your life? Enquiring minds want to know!

My high point came in the first game I ever played by mail. I drew Germany in a game in *Graustark* back in 1978, and everything went right for me. The only years I didn't get three builds were 1902 or 1906, but in those years I picked up two and six dots respectively, to end with twenty three. My opponents only seemed to NMR just as I was stabbing them, and fought amongst themselves even as I gobbled up the board—a dippers dream.

There've been some other memorable games over the years: the seventeen center "stab" of Mark Lew, the Austrian comeback game in *The Prince*,

getting killed in *Maniacal* by Scott Hanson and Kathy Caruso, a couple other wins...but the first game is the one I'll always remember. Too bad I haven't played another decent game in the last five years or so.

The most memorable zeen has to be Andy Lischett's "warehouse" issue of *Cheesecake*, issue #14 I think. Easily the cleverest single zeen ever produced—moves and press were behind foldout bathroom stall doors (as graffiti) or inside foldout crates. How Andy could put together an issue like that and still get it out on the deadline weekend boggles my mind.

The most memorable article was one from way back in *Whitestonia*, before *KK* came along. I don't recall any of the details, but I think it was sort of a con review that had John and Kathy knocking back slugs of arsenic to tune them up for playing dip, and laughing horrendously all the while. I still get a chuckle thinking about it, though I guess you had to be there at the time to appreciate it.

And there have been memorable moments in *Retal*, too. Our second anniversary issue was lots of fun, but I think the fourth anniversary, with the "Rock and Roll Soul Control" cover was even better. Julie's Langley parodies and Potato Head series were hilarious, and Bob Osuch's issue of *Woodpecker* were other high points.

But that's too much from me already. How about you folks?

✉ **return address** ✉

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first class

Letters in This Issue: Wallace Nicoll, Bob Olsen, Robert Sacks, Stephen Dorneman, Michael Hopcroft, Steve Langley, Kevin Brown, Don Del Grande, John Caruso, Jeff McKee, Jim Burgess, Linda Courtemanche, Jim Meinel, George Mann, Jesse Severe, Eric Brosius, Ken Peel, Phil Reynolds, Mark Nelson, Mark Berch, Andy Lischett, Paul Milewski, [Dick Martin], {Julie Martin}